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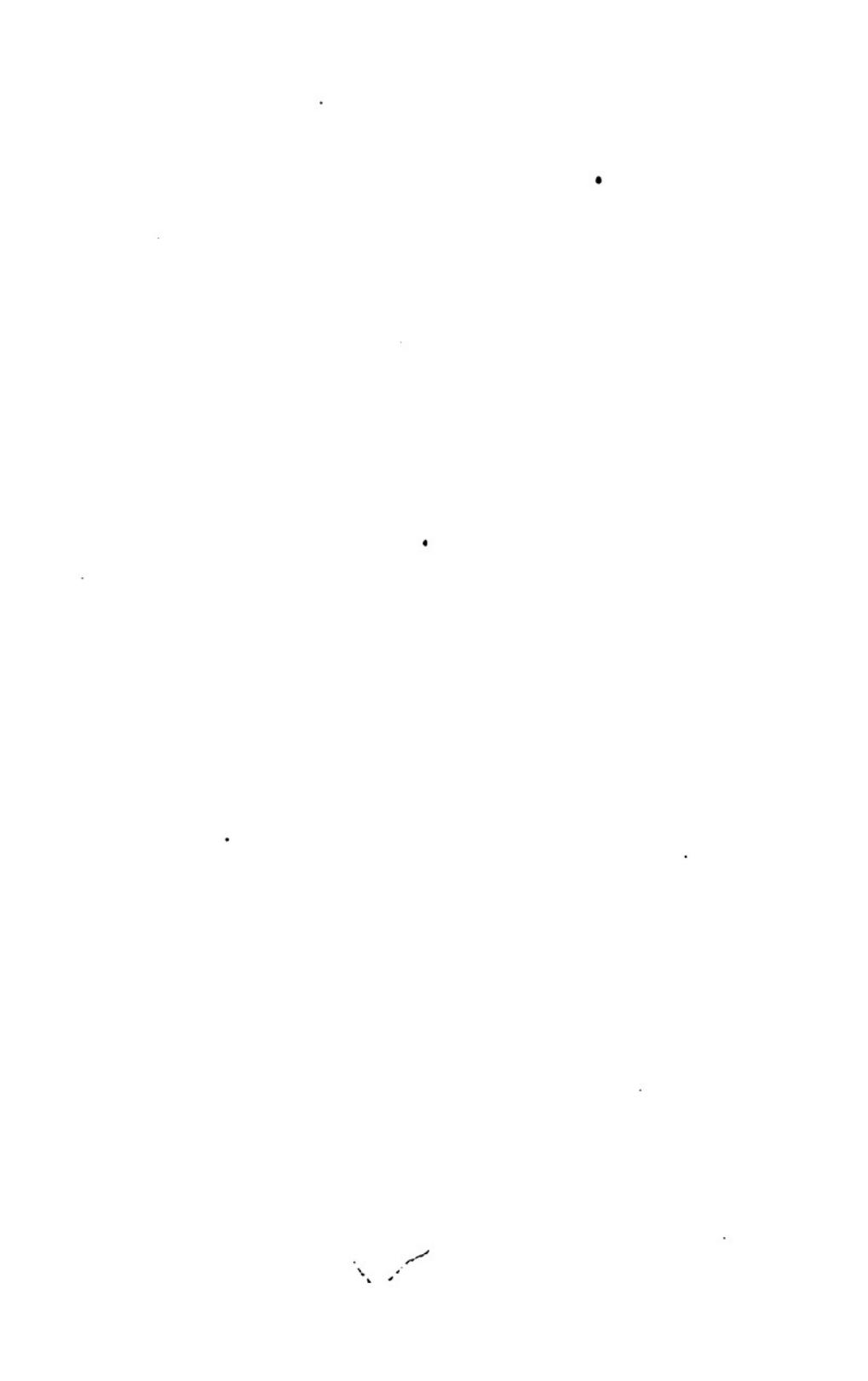








MEMORIES.



MEMORIES.

THE

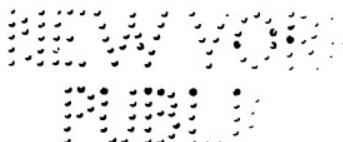
BEQUEST OF MY BOYHOOD.

POEMS.

BY

EDMUND FALCONER.

"Never forget the dream of your youth."—SCHILLER.

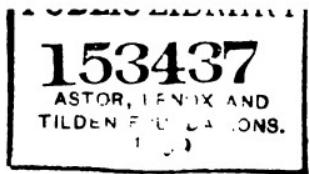


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THE FIRST MEMORY.

AN INVOCATION.

OH Thou ! veil'd Chastity, of form ideal,
Of deeds outspeaking, and so grandly real,
Who teaches of thy being wins belief
From some that mourn it to their God a grief.

Ethereal spirit, beautiful above
A pagan poet's rapt imaginings,
To Christian zealot semblanced in the dove
That heavenward bears his soul upon its wings.

Presumed inhabitant of every clime,
Worshipp'd in every age,
Angelic Chorus to the course of Time,
To youth and sage

A fond desire, and ever in thy prime.

Glorious Enchantress, from whose mystic cup we quaff
Perennial life—earth's immortality—
Flush with the wine of tears, and bubbling with bright
laugh,

A chalice and a fount it seems to be,
Exhaling radiant mists through which we see
That Hope's own iris spans the Heaven of Memory.
 Virginal beauty redolent of grace
 And tenderness divine,
In roughest hewn and uncouth dwelling-place
 The soul may thee enshrine,
 Become the mirror of thy angel face,
 And every spirit-delicacy thine.
Slender as reeds, and as the lily pale,
In form ofttimes though ne'er in purpose frail,
 Those whom thy gifts beseem,
 Dungeons, or deserts, or Affliction's pall,
 As they might Gods befall :
 Grief glorified becomes the theme
 Of canticles divine ;
 Oh most loved of the Nine
 With thee to dwell
Was Tasso blest in dark Ferrara's cell ;
 Or spirit freed of thy sweet will,
 And echoing Fancy's call
Pass'd gates, and guards, and pris'ning wall
 To wander with a woodland rill,
Or kiss the dawn upon some neighbouring hill.

And he,* sad doom'd with densely clouded sight,
 Yet flush of vigour, and in manhood's prime,

* Milton.

To hail no more the morning's cheerful light,
 A long-foreshadow'd grief, still out of time,
He, blind to Day's broad beam,
 Saw a full noon of radiance stream,
 And flood with light
 His chamber's night
 When heark'ning, and all present there
Thou didst intone high answer to his prayer.
 Soother of anguish, most beguiling care,
 Of Hope still whispering even to dark Despair,
 Not less than Heaven-born may'st thou seem,
 Though Poverty should hold thy hand,
 And Wealth bid thee farewell ;
 Though in a hovel thou shouldst dwell,
 On Greenland's chill, or Afric's burning strand,
 All goddess we must deem.
 More potent thine than Prosper's magic wand,
 And fairer thou than first Love's dream,
 Thy smile a spell
 That lifts the curtains of some lovelier land
 Where angel visitants no strangers seem.
 Whate'er thy name
 Among the mosses of Egeria's fount,
 By Delphi's marble shrine,
 Bound with the olives of Parnassus' mount
 Or Horeb more divine !
 Thou'rt still the same
 Heard by the Celt upon his mist-clad hill

In melancholy wail,
Lone haunter of some murmuring rill
By moonbeam pale !
Deem'd by the native of the torrid zone
An awe-inspiring God-sent guest,
Prompting the death-chant or prophetic moan
Of soul possess'd.
Nymph of my orisons, where'er
Thy most loved haunt may be,
My soul would waft its worship there,
And favour find with thee.

EGERIA.

THE FIRST HYMN OF AN ACOLYTE, UPON BEING ADMITTED
WITHIN THE VEIL OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

1.

WHEN Boyhood, trustful but of joys to come,
Left with light heart his tender-memoried home,
(Ah, truant, wherefore roam?)
Before the Orient, palely clad in grey,
Blush'd her first welcome to the God of Day,
And onward, upward, every step a bound,
As transport were in motion found,
 Hied far away ;
Nor paused to kiss the virgin lips of morn,
Dash'd with the dews that gemm'd the flowering thorn,
 The loveliest coronal of May,
Till reach'd the summit of some wood-crown'd hill,
Fast by the fount of many a sweet-voiced rill—
A shrine to which like honouring incense rose
The breath of every flower the valley grows,
And the whole Heaven with odours seem'd to fill ;
He turn'd, contented master o'er his will,
And bared his brow the while the winds caress'd,
 And (doubly blest

The lark then springing from his grassy nest)
Stood long and rapturously still ;
His soul enlarging, gladd'ning like the day
O'er all the varied loveliness that round him lay.
There, whilst his love instinctive grew
A worship of the Beautiful, the True,
His flushing cheek, and deeply heaving breast,
A sweet companion-presence first confess'd—
As if the ecstasy of sensuous thought
Itself into a separate being wrought,
Sole-sister like his bloomy brow to kiss,
And, by partaking, double every bliss.
Lovely human of its form and face,
 And azure eyes,
That turn'd to transport all surprise
 At its o'erawing grace,
One tranceful moment floating nigh,
Sylph-like, between him and the sky,
And then, fast fleeting on some cloud-borne car,
 Evanishing afar !
Too fair a vision so beheld to last,
 Did nothing itness of its transient stay ?
Yes, ever thence, it shone through life's long day
The loveliest memory of its morning past.

2.

When, chastely mantled, Evening came,
Soft whispering at his window frame,

Dark'ning the page on which he loved to pore,

And, touch'd by her reproachful look,

The student flung aside his book,

And like a sweetheart woo'd her out of door.

Or, museful, sought some lone sequester'd path

Which many turnings but no ending hath ;

Along which, when the Summer-time

Renew'd Earth's dream of Eden's prime,

Sweet tufts of violets and pansies grew,

Pied daisies, yellow cowslips, harebells blue,

And the wild rose both light and fragrance threw.

Or traced the course of some meandering stream

Whose limpid bosom glass'd the faintest beam

That tinged the ever-varying sky,

Or trembling told of Zephyr's softest sigh :

Till, reach'd at last some sylvan solitude

Where e'en the winds with stealthy steps intrude,

He paused, and awestruck heard, as round him fell

The thrilling radiance of the Evening star,

The faint, yet solemn, and melodious swell

Of aërial voices choir'd to work some spell

The rustling of a leaf might mar.

And lo ! the spirit of his dreams stood there

Lifelike, but most angelically fair,

Beside him, not as heretofore above,

Answ'ring with looks of equal light and love,

His rapt, impassion'd, and yet reverent gaze,

And of her fondness chiding his amaze,

Blushing with maiden pleasure, not with shame,
 As more assured his timid love became :
 Veiling her eyes, and drooping but to rest
 In dreamlike ecstasy upon his breast ;
 From which she vanish'd with the sigh
 That spoke his being overfraught with bliss,
 Lost like a vapour blending with the sky,
 Sooner than hers, ah ! then I wis
 Might he seek Dian's lips to kiss,
 The only other equal beauty nigh.

3.

When meditative Manhood turn'd aside
 From the rude turmoil of Life's thoroughfare,
 Where mere precedence seems the only care
 Of wrangling Envy and contentious Pride ;
 And bade secure his wearied spirit rest
 With folded wings on meek *Religion's* breast,
Glimpsed thro' the solemn aisles of some vast fane,
 Where dun-hued twilight reigns at noon profound—
 Some sombre legend traced on every pane,
 And sadd'ning o'er the cenotaphs around :
 Whose cloisteral arches chafed at every sound,
 When ceased the organ's glorifying strain,
 The murmuring audits of each step profane,
 That lightly loiter'd o'er that holy ground.
 Then, as before the altar high and grand
 He paused, upon its steps there seem'd to stand

An Eloise, whose lustrous beauty pale,
Despite of banded locks and shrouding veil,
A moonlike radiance round her shed ;
And beck'ning him with oh ! so fair a hand
That though as, moved by her command,
To Heaven he bent his honouring knee,
His heart enshrined that other Deity !
But with his first impassion'd word she fled,
 And on his upturn'd gaze,
 Once more to his amaze
 Alone amidst the sculptured dead,
Some stony-visaged saint frown'd down instead.

4.

When half in grief, and half in high disdain,
The Poet, weary of a task so vain,
Renounced his search for human sympathy—
(His mission fruitful but of mockery
Amongst the idol-worshippers of gain)
And like the Spartan cloaking o'er his pain—
Stifling the cries of his despairing heart,
Fled from the bustling street—the clamorous mart—
The rude disturbers of his reverie,
And sought in some lone studio, built apart
The worldling's vulgar and contemptuous eye,
The children mutely eloquent of Art—
(That silent sister nearest to his heart,)
Types of sweet sinless thoughts that never die—

A second birth, through Eden wand'ring still,
In which, of her sublimely mimic skill,
All but the procreant power of change beseems
The incarnation of Life's loveliest dreams !

When here the Poet, emulously still,
Mute as among a new-found kindred stood—

The type but of his glowing thoughts, until
The throbbing of his nobly envious heart—

(Patron'd at last among its brotherhood)

Waked Fancy's most imaginative mood,
Bidding the statued Echo lifelike start,
And every kindred spirit semblanced there
His momently increasing rapture share.
Then, of his high-wrought frenzy, Deified,
The first, last grace the jealous Jove denied
Their Titan sires, his kindling glance supplied.
New life upon the canvas seem'd to glow—

The marble waited but his will to speak—
So blest, need he no more unmated go,

Or, pilgrim-like, ideal beauty seek :
As sweetly conscious of a votary nigh
A softer, tenderer than rose's streak
Retinged the bloom on Cytherea's cheek,
To his enraptured eye ;

While fresher, deeper grew the ruby dye
Of her bright lips, soft-cushioning the sigh,
That like young Summer's breath between them stole,
Laden with dewy odours scatter'd by

The fluttering wings of her awaking soul ;
And vision ecstasy became,
Pulsating through his trembling frame
As the full tide of being seem'd to flow
Wave-like along the blue enamell'd veins—
Transparent as the lymph the sapphire stains,—
'Till lost, like sight, amidst her bosom's snow.
But when some murmuring rapture spoke
His soul's deep sense of ravishment,
And on the hallowing silence broke,
Which to illusive Fancy lent
A life, that with a falling snowflake went,
The dreamer stood again alone !
Though light and beauty from the canvas shone,
Serenely same, they charm'd no more ;
Cold to his touch the statued stone
. He still might pause before,
But ne'er again, Egeria-like, adore.

5.

Boyhood's bright dream—the student's fancy sweet—
The way-worn worldling's visionary saint,
The habitance in which the Poet loves to greet,
And with his soul's Elysian dreams acquaint
The haunting presence of his Destiny
(Waking the echoes of each lone retreat
With strains of ever-tender melody,
So love-lorn in the groves of Arcady

Sweet Philomel to Dian makes complaint).
These blest imaginings I mourn not now—
 Youth's angel visitants that faster fleet,
More transient, than the bloom on morning's brow :
 The rapt illusion and the fond conceit
 No more need I essay to paint :
 Each, all seem realized in Thee !
 Or, as the stars at dawn grow faint
 In the bright presence of their Deity,
So of thy beauty's more effulgent light,
 Those pilgrim-guiding glories of the night
 Fade into vacancy,
For ever lost to Memory's dazzled sight.
 Nor other sun can ever rise to me :
 When thou goest down blind must I be,
Since madman-like I bend on thee my gaze
 As on some mountain glacier's snowy crest,
 That melts not, though it seems to blaze,
 Reflecting back the sun's bright rays—
Such suns thine eyes, but ah ! the snow thy breast ;
If there some wandering angel pause to rest,
'Tis sacred sure to every ruder guest.
Chafe not, Egeria, that in thee I hail
 The load-star of my destiny ;
Too rude a worshipper though I should be,
Oh not in wrath, nor yet in mercy, veil
Thy brow, so intellectually pale,
Lending a queen-like and ethereal grace

To the soft virgin beauty of thy face.
Thou smil'st, and Doubt's last shadow leaves the sky !
Not whilst I live canst thou my gaze deny.
In all things beautiful thou art,
Nor need I clasp thee nearer to my heart ;
I did but see,
And lo ! my soul became possess'd of Thee !

ANNE HATHAWAY.

A TRADITIONARY BALLAD, SUNG TO A DAY DREAMER BY THE
MURMURS OF SHOTTERY BROOK.

1.

No beard on thy chin, but a fire in thine eye,
With lustiest Manhood's in passion to vie,
A stripling in form, with a tongue that can make
The oldest folks listen, maids sweethearts forsake,
Hie over the fields at the first blush of May,
And give thy boy's heart unto Anne Hathaway.

2.

She's a stout yeoman's daughter and prizes herself,
She'll marry an esquire or lie on the shelf ;
'Tis just ten years gone, since in maidenhood's prime,
To a farmer she said, " Nay, I'll bide my own time ; "
Now " Out and alas ! " all the kind neighbours say,
" She has married a stripling, has Anne Hathaway."

3.

That day ten years past—it was then Autumn time,
And the Shottery orchards were in their full prime—
Young Willie came over from Stratford to see
If any windfalls in Anne's pocket might be,
“For a kiss or an apple now come you to-day ?”
“Why, for both,” said the shrewd boy to Anne
Hathaway.

4.

The farmer he sat on the steps by the door,
“I've kine, sheep, and homestead, what can you want
more ?”
The little boy answer'd, ne'er dreaming how true,
“When I am her sweetheart, she cannot want you ;”
Anne stoop'd down and kiss'd him, and said, in mere
play,
“Yes, Willie's the sweetheart for Anne Hathaway.”

5.

The farmer laugh'd loud, “What a fine man he be,
You may kiss the wee laddie and ne'er jealous me.”
Willie blushing replied, “ You're a fool it is plain,
Or you'd not want ‘No’ said more than once and
again.”
The farmer trudged off, and scarce bade them good-day.
And the boy ate sour apples with Anne Hathaway.

6.

Then long years went over, and “ Anne’s hard to please,”
 Said yeomen at stacking—said shepherds on leas,—
 Till she went o’er to Welford to see the May Queen,
 And met there lithe Willie, just aged eighteen ;
 Who, slighting young lasses, was heard oft to say,
 “ That the Queen of all queans* there was Anne
 Hathaway.”

7.

At sundown the shortest way home he could show,
 O’er the ford and by field-paths (much longer we know);
 But he talk’d all the way with such marvellous skill,
 Anne doubted her eyes when they reach’d Baudon hill.
 And at Shottery brook she’d no power to say “ Nay,”
 When he said, “ You’re my sweetheart, proud Anne
 Hathaway.”

8.

He came o’er the fields at the next even-song,
 And Anne, half-ashamed, stole to meet him along,
 But the full-breasted passion of *Shakespeare’s* love dream
 Swept *her* will where it will’d, like a waif on a stream ;
 “ It was wooing and wedding at once,” the folks say,
 “ For the green callant Willie with Anne Hathaway.”

* This word, in Shakespeare’s time, had a more general and less offensive meaning than is given to it in modern dictionaries ; and is retained, in opposition to nice critical advice, as characteristic of Shakespeare’s fondness for a play upon words similar in sound but differing in sense.

9.

Soon Anne, with a husband in years but a score,
Full bless'd with three children, thought sadly of more,
For tho' quick to jest or to fashion a rhyme,
Willie's earnings were not those of men in their prime ;
And she sigh'd half assent when she heard the folks say,
That more nice than wise had been Anne Hathaway.

10.

Now, a matron demure, Anne a formal life led,
She got up betimes and went early to bed ;
But Willie at sundown, when staid folks went home,
Hied up Welcomb Hill through the wild woods to roam ;
Or would sit by the fire till the fresh blush of day,
Writing sonnets, sheer nonsense to Anne Hathaway.

11.

A store of old saws Anne could speak off by rote,
And oft wanted Willie their wisdom to note.
And he listen'd at times, but provokingly smiled,
Like a sage brought to book by an overwise child,
Or strangely perverting, with new rhymes, each say,
Took the wind from the sails of poor Anne Hathaway.

12.

In the woods around Charlcote, the Moon thought one
night
'Twas Endymion again singing hymns to her light ;

But the park-keepers knew it was Will, and one swore
 That the buck some sly poacher had just tumbled o'er
 Had been slain by his hand, and, for all Will could say
 He was stock'd as a scapegrace—sad Anne Hathaway
 •

13.

Then Willie, who chafed under sense of deep wrong,
 From Apollo's * own bow sent a shaft in a song,
 Which prick'd and so venom'd the knight Lucy's breast
 That his frowns and his threats all the Shakespeare
 opprest ;
 So Will for their sakes fled from Stratford away,
 And left a grass widow in Anne Hathaway.

14.

To her father's home then Anne as housekeeper went,
 And sad months and years half dependent there spent
 For the old folks in hard times were testy, cross-grain'd,
 And oft of her children as burdens complain'd ;
 And in their best tempers were still heard to say
 “That a miss was the marriage of *Anne Hathaway.*”

15.

By the waggon from London a small packet came
 “For y^e Mistress Anne, Hymen Shakespeare did name,”

* Shakespeare's consciousness of his poetic strength, may be inferred from the motto to the first printed edition of his poems :—

“Vilia miretur vulgus ; mihi flanus Apollo
 Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.”

In it were kind words and of high hopes a store,
 But good moneys too, and a promise of more ;
 Which was kept in due season, and made the folks say
 That "*some wives were worse off than Anne Hathaway.*"

16.

Next came down rich dresses, that made poor Anne stare,
 She was fearful to handle and much more to wear ;
 When to church in the plainest she one Sunday went,
 All eyes in astonishment on her were bent ;
 But Anne toss'd her head, for she heard the folks say
 "*That a far-seeing wench had been Anne Hathaway.*"

17.

The newsmongers, now that the Scots Queen was dead,
 And the Spanish Armada thrash'd, captur'd, or fled,
 And laid up were Frobisher, Hawkins, and Drake,
 Of Shakespeare's new fortunes much marvel did make ;
 And when the truth fail'd them would whisper and say
 That the Queen was thought jealous of Anne Hathaway.

18.

With faith in broad acres, full barns, flocks and herds,
Anne doubted much profit from rhymes and fine words ;
 She saw no work done to ensure wealth of gold,
 In the distance its growth but a dream-life could hold,
 From which waking up, her boy-husband one day,
 Might come home broken-hearted to Anne Hathaway.

19.

One evening in Autumn deep sadness came o'er,
As her pitcher she fill'd in the well near the door,
For an over-ripe apple she found by the brim,
And she thought what a gift it had once been for him
A drop speck'd its bloom, and it came spite of " Nay,"
From thy heart, not the cold well, proud Anne
Hathaway.

20.

It was warm, and spread over the fruit the rich dye
Of a heart-mist exhaled by Love's roseate sky,
Like gems on the pitcher the cold drops shone clear,
But the gem of all gems was that quick-wasting tear :
She put up the apple to kiss it next day,
"I must call in the children," said Anne Hathaway.

21.

She set down the pitcher and lean'd o'er the gate
To tell the young truants their supper did wait ;
Susannah was spelling for Judith a book,
And Hamet was paddling about in the brook ;
And she saw near the bridge, just a stone's throw away
One who seem'd a great lord unto Anne Hathaway.

22.

His doublet and trunks were of velvet, that shone
Like the mellow-green moss on an old coping-stone,

A plume of white feathers his felt hat did grace,
And his collar and ruffles were broad Flanders lace,
With his buff boots and spurs he look'd gallant and gay,
Yet were tears in his eyes then, cold Anne Hathaway.

23.

Susannah stopp'd reading and bade Judith look,
For Hamet stood fast in the mud of the brook ;
With his eyes wonder-fix'd, and his mouth open wide.
Then the stranger advanced, and when close by Anne's
side,
Though his bearded lip quiver'd, did smilingly say,
"Will you give me an apple, dear Anne Hathaway ? "

24.

Anne started, and trembled, and look'd in his face,
Oh ! could it be Willie's with majesty's grace ?
Though it beam'd youthful still, there the boy was no
more,
For the full front of power and command it now wore ;
And she shrank back afraid when she heard *Shakespeare*
say,
"Don't you know your own husband, dear Anne
Hathaway ? "

25.

"'Tis my father," cried Susan, and sprung to his breast,
From that moment ever beloved there the best,—

But the others he call'd, and with hand and lip grac
And tenderly then their coy mother embraced ;
“ When I ask'd for an apple you never said ‘ Nay,’
But a *kiss* was a great gift from Anne Hathaway.”

26.

He went o'er to Stratford the very next morn,
And bought the *great* house where the Clopton was bo
And rich lands round Welcomb he purchased right &
And a propertied gentleman was, past all doubt ;
And though the poor title his fame flouts to-day,
Still, she married an Esquire, did Anne Hathaway !



PATRICK AND MARY.

▲ BALLAD FOUNDED UPON FACT.

THE times were hard, but Patrick said,
“There’s plenty o’er the sea ;
And well to do I nothing dread
If thou wilt go with me.”

Now Mary was a timid thing,
That trembled at a storm,
And like a startled dove took wing
At ev’ry light alarm.

But most she fear’d the wild sea-wave
Far tossing to and fro,
An ever restless, hung’ring grave,
And greedy but of woe.

Yet, looking into Patrick’s eyes,
She reads such deep love there,
A mimic courage his supplies
All things with him to dare.

And, wiping from her cheek the tear,
She says devotedly,
“ Go where thou wilt, my husband dear
I'll through the world with thee.”

But when with old friends they shook h
Poor Mary wept indeed,
For they set out for foreign lands
With many a “ God speed.”

* * * *

The bark with all its canvas spread
Moved swift, but glidingly,
Till having clear'd Kinsale's old head
It breasted the deep sea.

Then quick the wind swells out the sail
And midst the cordage sings ;
The waves foam round—poor Mary qua
And close to Patrick clings.

Fondling her head upon his breast,
He parts her locks of brown,
And points out to the glorious west,
The sun just going down.

“ We follow, love, his radiant track,
Like him shall fortune smile.”
But Mary sigh'd, and fain look'd back
For her dear native isle.

'Twas gone ! Deep buried in the mist
Of dark'ning storm-urged night,
Was something there, full well I wist,
The Captain's self to fright.

The sailors climb the shrouds and furl
The flutt'ring sails with speed ;
Seems everything in haste and whirl,
And time a precious need.

And now a rumbling sound is heard,
The mist seems big with life,
Their loins the stalwart seamen gird
As for some mighty strife ;

Clew all things fast, and ready make
To meet the coming woe :
The Captain cries, " For God's dear sake,
Ye women go below."

Scarce have they hurried down, before
The hatches are made fast ;
They hold their breaths, for bursts the roar
Of that womb's birth at last.

Plunged deep, dash'd back, the vessel shook
And reel'd as stricken dead,
Then like an angry courser took
Its own way right ahead.

But fiercer still the loud winds rave
And for destruction yearn,
They dip its bows in every wave,
And flood from stem to stern.

Poor Mary, shudd'ring, hears the coil,
But, clasp'd in Patrick's arms,
Thinks Heav'n too good his hopes to foil,
And fears no further harms.

"Great God ! what's that ?" a sterner shoc
A sound that crash'd and jarr'd ;
A roar of waves that seem'd to mock
The shrieks above them heard.

"She's struck, she fills !" is now the cry,
The hatchway's broken ope ;
From gurgling waters up they fly
With waves on deck to cope.

The vessel, grounded on a reef,
Each billow dashes o'er ;
The boats can promise no relief,
For round the breakers roar.

One hope remains, their forms to lash
To fixtures on the deck,
And let the waters o'er them wash
If holds till morn the wreck.

Twas early night, and winter too ;
Long ere the dawn came there,
The hopefulest of that bold crew
Had mated with despair.

At length the cold grey morning broke ;
But happier then the dead
To many dying ; no one spoke
Till nigh an hour had sped.

Some of the sturdier crew at last
Unslung the smallest boat,
And hopeful glances shoreward cast
When it was got afloat.

With this good news they hurried round,
Full thirty dead lay there ;
But 'mongst the living one was found
Past hope, though not past care.

'Twas Mary, still by Patrick's side,
Her head upon his breast.
So close, his heart-beat, ere she died,
Seem'd knolling her to rest.

Her fragile form so wasted, spent,
One motion served to kill ;
The sailors, but on good intent,
Are slow to speak their will.

“Your life remains, but hers is gone,
Or going past recall ;
Amongst the living still make one,
The boat will hold us all.”

He look'd up, doubting what they said,
Look'd down upon his wife,
And shudd'ring slightly shook his head,
As he had done with life.

They speak apart : says one, “Let's go ;”
Another says, “ 'Twere wrong :
Let us but chide and flout his woe,
He'll come with us along.”

He has forgot that they are nigh,
All things, save his one care,—
Still to the last to greet her eye,
And bid it not despair.

“Come, come,” the sailors roughly said,
“We cannot longer wait ;
She's dying—here are thirty dead,
Enough to share her fate.

“Our boat, though made of gallant stuff,
Can't battle with this sea ;
Of peril we have had enough,
One night, for charity.

“ Come, come, for we must quit the wreck,
Its gaping grave to fly,
And once we drop from off the deck,
We shall not hear your cry.”

He hears them not, or if their chide
Finds echo in his ear,
It moves him not to quit her side,
And she must tarry here.

Lash'd to the deck by him whose arm
Upheld her through the night,
To greet that morn which now no charm
Hath for her dimming sight.

He held between her and each wave—
He warm'd her in his breast.
Alas ! to think it could not save
Its bridal-welcomed guest.

Their hands are lock'd, her fixing grasp
Full, fond reliance spoke,
Could man now rend that tender clasp,
The elements had broke.

He cannot leave her—look, her eye
Entreats him not to go—
No, no, let them together die ;
He will not leave her so.

* * *

With love of life, however strong
Within the roughest breast,
Some holier feelings sent along,
Still fit us to be blest :

And 'midst the war of wind and wave,
Much risk the seamen make,
And in the presence of the grave
Stay long for pity's sake.

But from the boat a warning voice
Is sent, and they must go,
Or stay, and die—they have no choice,
They're putting off below.

One effort more, he will not stir ;
They vanish o'er the side,
And he is left alone with her,
His young, but dying bride ;

Who knows not—every sense asleep
Save one—that he is here—
That now he dies his watch to keep
Beside her lonely bier !

Oh, who shall paint his feelings when
Her gentle spirit fled,
Alive—alone, how felt he then,
Thus coffin'd with the dead !

Far from the wreck, the boat's crew gone,
Still battling for their lives,
Forget that on its planks alone
One loyal heart survives.

And when they reach the distant shore,
Full many hours have sped,
And when they tell of him, 'tis o'er,
He too is of the dead.

“'Twas there, where foams the wasteful main,
We left him on the deck ;
The reef no vestige doth retain
Of that ill-fated wreck.”

SEEKING A GRAVE.

1.

THERE'S one strange vision my dull memory hath,
Will live, as seen, for ever there,
Wand'ring alone where few would dare ;
Sad thoughts and rustling leaves along my path
My sole companions were.

2.

The weird-like solitude of moorland hills
Gasted the eye on every side ;
Sobb'd now and then a river's tide
Against its banks, as drunk with mountain rills,
And oft the night-wind sigh'd.

3.

The moon went down, and faint the starlight grew
The wild'ring mists so dark became,
That help from Heav'n 'twas time to claim,
For drifting to despair my *soul* I knew ;
'Twas then the vision came.

My spirit-wing'd eyes pursued the blast,
Upon which th' unburied dead swept past,
And sighted deep in its ghostly gloom,
One, shroudless, seeking an unblest tomb.
Many dread spectres were in that host
Awful to view ; but I fear'd him most,
For I thought he strangely liken'd me,
And shudder'd to think such I might be,
Much sadder he seem'd than all the rest,
And painfully anxious to find his quest.
He sought it first where the rank grass grew,
In earth fatted with blood instead of dew,
But the raven that rose from his putrid prey,
With the flap of his dark wing scar'd away.
Barrows like hills rose over the plain,
In layers below grim warriors slain,
Rotted together ; for friend and foe,
Rank and file, indiscriminate go
Into these pits, with Ah ha ! Oh ho !
But symbols were placed o'er every mound—
Blazons, inscriptions of hon'ring sound,
Or something of which the sad sprite there,
Wistfully gazing, could claim no share,
'Twas plain he must seek his rest elsewhere.

Thence he flew to an old burial-ground,
So glutted with dead, in heaps around,
And exposed to view their skeletons lay,

Disgorged from its womb when stripp'd of clay.
And I knew by the noise the Sanctified made
At his approach, 'twas a *Suicide's* shade !
They started up, and, with hideous rattle
Of marrowless bones, they offer'd him battle,
How their jarring joints did strain and creak !
How clatter'd their jaws their rage to speak !

How the fire-fanatic smould'ring there
From their eyeless sockets seem'd to glare
With "Anathema ! accurst despair
Of bell, book, and candle, still beware !
Ne'er 'mong the holy expect a tomb
Ye who anticipate God's great doom !"

Darker and darker night's shadows grew,
Sadder and sadder my likeness flew
O'er morass and heath, hill-top and crag,
'Till his weary wings began to flag.
Rested he then by a lonely grave,
Where darnels, hemlock, and mandrakes wave
O'er th' unwed mother of babe unborn,
Clutch'd by the throat and strangled in scorn
By the wretch who had kiss'd her lips at morn
Never a friend she had thought to warn
That she went to meet him alone that night,
Where was the need ?—they had changed troth pl
Trustful she came, and none heard her cry
Save he who had lurëd her there to die

Under his hand, with a God-cursed lie !
Ta'en without reck'ning her sins so few—
Death had atoned, and the Suicide knew
That least of all he could hope to rest
With the martyr faith of Woman's breast.

Eager he sought then the murderer's tomb,
There certain of greeting, sure of room ;
But he had, repenting just in time,
E'en at the block been forgiv'n his crime ;
And his head and trunk with space to spare
Shrank from giving the Suicide share.

Darker and darker night's shadows grew,
Sadder and sadder my likeness flew
Over the land and over the sea,
Into the realms of Heathenry.
A catacomb's entrance, vast and drear,
Tempted him down within to peer.
But blank it seem'd as his own despair !
A hideous toad like a hermit there
On a sapless bone lay slumbering—
'Twas all remain'd of a mighty king !

As rich in his tomb as on his throne,
The gold and jewels around him strewn,
In the huge sarcophagus of stone,
Where for three thousand years he had known

The seeming of rest, if not the grace,
Had tempted a king of a later race
To scatter his bones—his tomb deface.

In niches above the mummies lay
Of very great men in their own day,
But most of them knaves, the truth to say,
Still aping in death their former sway,
O'er the meaner herd, whose bones below
Had crumbled to dust long years ago ;
Or flung together in heaps pellmell,
Or tumbled out of each flimsy shell,
Which to the touch into pieces fell,
Lay foetid and dank against the wall,
Sculls and toes, legs, arms, large bones and small,
So intermingled, not one could call
Its neighbour part of itself at all.
Bloodshedders enough I'm sure were there,
Descendants of Cain, and worse I'll swear ;
Hoary old priests of infamous rites,
Mention of which the Devil affrights :
Lechers and thieves, and parricides too,
Never were known an uglier crew,
Ready a deed of darkness to do.

“ And here at least,” the Suicide said,
“ They will not refuse my corse a bed.”
But I answer'd “ Yes,” as for the dead ;
“ Sadly they sinn'd, but they never knew

Aught of the truth was reveal'd to you,
Of the saving faith which you denied,
Under the sting of your wounded pride,
Of the tender God who for you died,
Of the angry God whom you defied,
Preferring to be your own mad guide."

He look'd at me full that sad Despair—
No longer I saw my likeness there,
And I seem'd to lose my dread and care.
He turn'd away and renew'd his flight
Into the realm of Eternal Night,
Sadder and sadder no doubt he flew,
Darker and darker, 'till lost to view ;
Then the morning broke the far skies through.

THE LAST OF THE CREW.

"A woman, who seemed the most intelligent of the party, told me that she had been eyewitness to the death of the last of these unfortunates. She said, 'He was a big strong man, and that, after wandering to and fro for a long time, he sat down upon the beach, and bending his head upon his hands and knees, without once looking up, so died.'"—Vide Dr. Rae's *Account of the Manner in which he obtained the Relics of the Franklin Expedition.*

"The strong man, when about to die,
Sat down upon the beach," she said :
Hope's last mirage had fled the sky,
And to despair he bent his head.

Poor head how hot ! his hands how cold !
His hands ? what gaunt spare bones were they ;
They could not chafe, nor yet enfold,
Nor recognize what on them lay.

With toil upturn'd, propp'd on his knees
They senselessly their burden bore,
Till it like them began to freeze,
And cold, it felt their chill no more.

Along that ice-ribb'd frosted beach
His perish'd comrades scatter'd lay :
Had he just ta'en a glance at each,
And striven, without the power, to pray ?

When first their dreary march began,
The hardiest and most hopeful too,
He volunteer'd to lead the van,
And oft sung out to cheer the crew.

He first the ice-floe's danger braved,
First clamber'd to each snow-mount's crest,
From which his staff and kerchief waved,
Seem'd like a banner to the rest.

So confident were all that he
Must reach the wish'd-for bourne some day,
Each dying one begg'd him to be
The bearer home of his last say.

With many blessings he'd been stor'd
For parents, wives, and children dear,
Not to forget, full oft implor'd,
But *his* last sigh there's none to hear.

His latest comrade over there
So seated, stark and dead he found,
And straighten'd out—'twas all his care
The next snowfall would make his mound.

Oh ! ere his own strong spirit fled,
With torpor still maintaining strife,
Whilst he sat waiting to be dead !
What visions must have lengthen'd life ?

Visions of far-off lands and seas,
That but in beauteous changes vie,
One ruffling to the faintest breeze,
Or bosoming the roseate sky.

The other clad in every tint,
Of sight-delighting dew-fed green,
With blossoms, fruits, and flowers besprinkled
And festoon'd like a young May-queen.

His aching eyes beheld no more,
The desert's drear eternal white,
The dull grey sky that darken'd o'er,
Or, worse, the three months' clear cold night

Glist'ning with stars that would not set
So long, they liked his misery ;
Against their mocks he most did fret,
They eyed him down so fixedly.

But now beneath the temperate haze
Of England's dewy skies he sat ;
With light came warmth in flooding rays,
And dreamy sounds he gladden'd at—

What were they ? why, a murmuring rill,
The humming of a busy bee,
The clack perchance of some old mill,
“ A ploughboy whistling o'er the lea ; ”

The west wind whisp'ring to the trees,
A neighbouring robin's gushful lay,
The lisp of children at his knees—
And so his spirit pass'd away.

THE LOVE TRYSTE.

A MEDIEVAL ROMANCE, IN IRREGULAR VERSE.



THE PROEM.

WHEN through the realms of Christandie,
The Gossip * dear of Chivalrie
Stray'd North and South and East and West
To be an ever-welcome guest
In court and camp and border tow'r,
In lordly hall or lady's bow'r ;
And garrulous of deeds of arms
Of fierce encounters—dire alarms,
Of knightly jousts and ladies' charms,
Would oft the wakeful hours prolong
'Twixt couching-time and evensong.
He whiles rehearsed to please Sir Page
Or Demoiselle of tender age,
A true love-story, full of woe,
And when he saw their eyes o'erflow,

* Froissart.

He knew that he had pleased them well.—
 Ah ! should the simple tale we tell
 Like tribute win—enough for Fame !
 Such tears will consecrate our name.

PROLOGUE.

FROM noontide to sundown—far into the night
 Troll the lay, and the bridal feast merrily hold,
Tell your feats in the chase—boast your deeds in the
 fight
 Like tall men, dark bridegroom, and grim Baron
 bold.

Pledge your guests and each other in Malvoisy wine,
 Let no lapse of loud speech in your revel occur,
To the Bride's health respond, and let no man divine
 That your thoughts are still fearful of dwelling on
 her ;

That you see her sometimes sitting lone in her bow'r,
 Mutt'ring oft to herself with a wild-gleaming eye,
 And, tho' half-crush'd, you dread in that fair fragile
 flow'r,
 Lives a spirit that yet may your stern will defy.

Flood that sad image out, seethe it o'er with red wine,
 She is pallid no longer—a young blushing bride,

"My will made my child's"—and "My wife's must be
mine"—

Thought that grim Baron bold—thought the Groom
by his side.

So both jocund ere long, drinking full measures deep,
They jested and revell'd till midnight had pass'd,
Then with nods and with winks bade their guests go
to sleep,
And well flush'd with red wine sought the bride's
bow'r at last.

To his daughter the Baron would say, "Wench, good
night,"
And so oft coarsely jesting they climb'd up the stair,
Knock'd in vain at the door—burst it open with might,
Tumbled in, and grew sober—for no bride was there !

1.

THE Sun far sinking grandly died,
And blest a scene, which if denied
The amber glories of his beam
To flood with gold the lowland stream,
Or lend its flash to mountain rill,
Or bronze the helmet of the hill,
That warrior-like doth interpose,
And vast its shield of shadow throws

O'er plains, long panting under blaze
Of noon's unmitigated rays,
Wanting these glories still that scene
For beauty must have homaged been,
Reposeful vision'd in the gray,
Cold dusk that shrouds both night and day.

2.

On either hand a mountain rose
To flout the sky—oh ! not with snows,
But bearded crags, and these between
Full many a patch of verdure seen
Relieved the eye, and lured the feet
Of wand'lers to a toilsome seat.
Huge belts of trees around each base
Gave both a more majestic grace,
A giant brood, of ancient date,
With branch and bole in rev'rend state ;
And sapling sprays with leaflet fringe
Still virginal of summer's tinge.

3.

Between these hills and woods around,
Which join'd afar, and vision bound,
A lake and dreamlike valley lay,
Thro' which a streamlet told its way
In many a curve and serpent bend,
As if its waters would not wend

In haste thro' such a lovely scene,
And lingering kiss'd each meadow-green.

4.

Beyond the lake, which gleam'd at rest
Like jewel dropp'd in beauty's breast,
A castle rose, a nobler pile
Graced not the surface of the isle ;
Tho' on its wide extent were found
Full many such as empires bound,
Raised adverse nations to repel
Of fence and force impregnable,
As e'er bade inmate safety know
Or frown'd defiance at a foe.

5.

Its battlements, a grim display
Of sullen granite, whose decay
Immortal eyes alone might see,
Preserved the same dark dignity
Which doth invest the seashore rock,
That reckless of the tempest's shock,
Above the reach of ocean's rage,
In silence sternly seems to mock
The wordy war they vainly wage.
Impassive and to change unknown,
Time had for them no dirge, or knell,
Each seem'd a Stoic, turn'd to stone,

The work of some masonic spell,
And sunbeam shone and shadow fell,
But past, they nought of either tell.

6.

Such was the hour forgotten long,
Its only chronicle this song :
A young man, neither sad nor gay,
Was wending slowly on his way,
And such the scene before him lay.

7.

A short green tunic, tightly braced
In gather'd folds around his waist,
Scarce reaching to his well-turn'd knee,
Was scant and plain enough to see :
But opening o'er his manly breast
It show'd a costlier inner vest,
And snow-white plume and hat of felt,
And sword of price and jewell'd belt ;
And silken hose and sandal shoon
Proved him no ill-condition'd loon.

8.

Of noble bearing, lithe and tall,
His presence graced or field or hall ;
Right gentle both of mould and mien,
His high descent at once was seen,

As strength and beauty did unite
To make his form all eyes delight,
To Love and Friendship ever dear,
He look'd a man his foes must fear.

9.

If journey'd he to lady's bow'r
Full sure he had forestall'd the hour ;
For many a pause this young knight made,
And fondly gazed as on some scene
Of former joy, and long delay'd,
As though with every blade of green
He would an old acquaintance claim :
But paused he longest where a name
Was graven on an old oak's trunk :
The characters, though deeply sunk,
By time had so distorted grown,
That few had them as letters known :
They tested well the knight's keen eye,
And his fond faithful memory.

10.

Breathing the name, his lips he press'd
Against the bark—the tree caress'd ;
Then from his belt a knife he drew,
And cleansed and fashion'd them anew
So carefully, *She* might be bye,
And thanking him with loving eye.

11.

So fond and so absorb'd he wrought,
Of passing time he took no thought,
Till startled by th' increasing shade,
Like one who had the truant play'd,
He saw 'twas past th' appointed hour,

And she whose name his knife had traced
Perhaps now wept within her bow'r,

And mourn'd her confidence misplaced.
Ah ! bitter thought, his instant flight
Proved that no doubt could so affright,
Save doubt of death or broken plight.

So speeds an arrow from the bow,
So but expectant lovers go,
Or warriors haste to meet a foe.

12.

Again he paused, he must not reach
The lake's far seen and open beach,
Around which ranged the warder's eye
When looking from his turret high.
His pause was but the path to find
That led the belt of trees behind,
Then wound between them and the hill,
Which rose above them dark and still :
And here night's gloom more gloomy grew
For far the trees their branches threw,

Like suppliants to the mountain's side,
In homage to its statelier pride.
It seem'd a dark, unearthly way
Ev'n in the brightest hours of day,
A place where elves and spectres might
Be muster'd, ere the seal of night
Gave to their short-lived, dread command
The sleeping and unconscious land.
Where spells were wrought, to fright manki
The terror of each wandering hind.

13.

At length the widening path became
Less like a place of ghostly fame,
For there recedes the mountain's side,
And here the opening trees divide :
The glow of evening's latest beam,
Half blending with a limpid stream
Of waking moonlight, found its way
In shimmers thro' each leafy spray.
The path had swept beyond the lye
Of that huge castle, dark and high,
But, turning, you might still behold
Th' embroider'd banner's glancing gold.
Or thro' some opening catch the sweep
Of flanking tower or donjon keep.

14.

Again it plunges in the shade,
Or has the young knight only stray'd ?
Why cease his rapid steps ? Why hush'd
Are now his breath's light sounds ? Why crush'd
Is that frail tender flower, which lies
'Neath him, scarce conscious that it dies ?
So lingeringly he press'd its head,
He never meant on it to tread.

15.

Onward, yet still within the shade,
Peeping, behold a grassy glade.
Round which the murmuring branches wave,
As if to them offence it gave.
The haunt of fairies it had been
Who danced by moonlight on its green
And kept it still of acorns clean ;
The spited oaks threw all the shade
They could upon this tiny glade,
And whispering oft their dark intent
Seem'd so on its destruction bent,
That liken'd they the greedy sea
Encroaching on some island shore,
And flinging sand upon its lea,
And daily gaining more and more.
Or, yea, a host of rebels round
Some ancient royalty of right,

To which they would set narrow'r bound,
And threaten oft to use their might.

16.

So murm'rous round the oaks did press,
As sinister was their caress ;
One, bolder than the rest, had made
A step within the charmèd sphere
And grown awhile, but since had paid
For his temerity full dear.
For when with branches high and strong
He flourish'd proudly, and had long
Forgot his crime, some just hand lopp'd
His gay luxuriance, and chopp'd
His trunk in twain, within a foot
Or two of its presumptuous root.
Then of the branches, cut to make,
Was planted many a sturdy stake
Upon each side, and (rude design)
The pliant osier's faithful twine
Bound these upright, and so they based
An oaken plank securely placed.
The trunk beneath in service vied,
And, reft of all its stately pride,
Still many a sapling shoot sent forth,
(The parent's fall the children's birth)
And these the Genius of the glade

Had bent and twined around the chair
'ill they a leafy alcove made,
And tendril flow'rs, bright and rare,
ingling with these nice fancy fed
ith the smiles and odours which they shed.

17.

o this greenwood couch there sate that night
youthful lady so fair and bright
u might think her a sylph of the upper air
ho had paused to rest her light wing there,
t to a fanciful solitude prone,
d caught by its loveliness so lone,
it that her cheek had a changeful hue,
id the lily there, the rose came too :
it that her lip and the pout living there
ould give you of passion and cheat you of pray'r ;
it that, half hidden within the shade
hich the branching saplings and flow'rs made,
e throb-like flash of a diamond bright,
t it caught the fix'd gleam of the pale moonlight,
etray'd of her bosom the billowy swell,
d seem'd of an earthlier feeling to tell
ian belongs to the tenants of yon bright sky,
here hearts never wither nor burn nor die.
et a faithfuller heart in Elysian field
e'er beat than that bosom did enshield,
t had all of an angel's but the chill

Perfection conveys to mortal sight,
It had all of an angel's but the skill
To discover the wrong path from the right :
If no true child of Heav'n, to let her stray
'Mong the children of Earth were a dangerous game,
With her for a guide of the sinfullest way
The difference would seem but a shadow, a name :
And where'er were the Heav'n, whence, bright, came
she
Of the true, it a pow'rful rival must be.
Her hooded cloak was thrown back on the chair,
And her neck and shoulders were partly bare,
For a treacherous veil was her dark brown hair ;
Which rich to profusion, hung down full low,
But stray'd like mists o'er the glacier's snow,
For the zephyr was somewhere there I trow.
An ample robe of the sheerest white,
Enfolding her form, conceal'd not quite
Its exquisite mould, for her taper waist
A zone, stiff with jewels and gold, embraced.
The gems were of water as priceless as rare,
By an ancestor brought from the famed Holy War,
And preserved ever since the maids of her race
On the day of their bridal to deck and grace :
And their flash meted well with the Star's bright ray
That precedes and heralds the God of Day ;
But as lost that Star is in his full light,
The gems faintly shone where her eyes shone bright.

Limpid and flush as the full moon's gleam,
When she steps from a gauzy cloud of white,
(Which melts into ether behind her beam,)
And walks the heavens a Queen bedight,
Was each orb's deep ray—the soul living there
Could drink deeply of love, and as deep of despair :
It was imaged best by her own quiet lake,
Too deep for a light passing wind to shake,
But a pulse-like breath from its dark centre came
Which told of a might it were hard to tame
If evoked by fit spell—let a storm awake,
And its heave might companion the sobbing earthquake
And thus the full swell of her billowy breast
The tempest of passion alone could test,
And but once and for ever—the fatal strife
Where feeling is frenzy will end but with life.
With the storm to its cave goes the lake to its bed,
But its passion-pulse still'd the heart lies dead !

18.

And such was the Lady youthful and bright,
Who bless'd with her presence the forest glade,
And all unconsciously cheated night
Of the homage due to its gloomy shade,
For who could think aught of earth or air
When that Lady, beauteous beyond compare,
Sat pensive and lonely and lovelily there,
And made a Saint's shrine of that greenwood chair ?

19.

Longer, my Muse, than thou'st taken to tell
 Of her and her beauty the young knight stood,
Fix'd like the victim of some strong spell,
 Gazing from under that gloomy wood.
Wherefore you say if a step would place
 That nymph in her beauty in his embrace !
Wherefore, oh wherefore, could it be
 He doubted that Lady's identity ?
Oh shameful thought, too distinct his view,
 His eye too good, and his heart too true.
'Tis ever thus when the goal we gain,
 To which we've hurried thro' joy and pain,
Which cheated sight of the passing way,
 Or lengthen'd in dreams the toil of day,
We wilfully seek some doubt to cope,
 Pause on the threshold and play with Hope,
Or saucy and coy of too much bliss,
 Strive by forbearance to heighten this.
And thus when her breath's light sounds he heard,
 The rapture of meeting he deferr'd.

20.

Longer had lasted his deep-set gaze,
Tho' his veins seem'd fire, his pulse a blaze,
But that she rose, and sad looking round,
Spake in a voice whose musical sound
Had served for a syren or sylph or aught

That e'er embodied a lovely thought.
“He comes not, tho' the hour is past,
Ah, must I deem him false at last ?”
“Oh rather deem when set the Sun
His time-eternal course was run,
That he, malignant, fled too fast
My life's sole purpose—hopes to blast.
Think Heav'n itself unjust—untrue—
But Gerald, never false to you !”

21.

Some such folly was't he spoke,
As from the covert wood he broke ;
Around her form his arms he flung,
And clasp'd her to his throbbing heart ;
Then to her lips in rapture clung,
As tho' they could to his impart
A kindred with the soul, whose thought
They blushing into being brought.
Nay, frown not, list'ner, stern or cold,
Nor dare to think I've rudely told :
They love too well to lightly fall ;
And if their greeting served to call
A deeper tinge to Dian's cheek,
It did her sympathy but speak.

22.

With gentle hand the lady held

Her lover off a little way,
While each the other's features spell'd
 Thrice o'er, but not one word did say.
All sense of being in their gaze,
Both seem'd trance-bound of their amaze,
That love's bright dream so long ideal,
Had proved to waking vision real :
 And well that silence did them suit,
Implying more than words could say ;
 The stars above them were less mute,
But not so eloquent as they.

23.

At length the knight and lady sate
 Them down upon the sylvan couch,
Their hearts with all the bliss elate,
 Their eyes did eloquently vouch,
Murmuring their joys ; but soon arose
 Eager inquiries of what each befell—
Long parted years ? what cares ? what woes ?
 Had lengthen'd absence' chilling spell.
But much of these my Muse denies,
So blended questions with replies,
That their inextricable maze
On memory's scroll confounds the gaze.
Something of perils did he speak,
Which blanch'd awhile the maiden's cheek,
And something too she half essay'd

Of her own woes, but Joy forbade
The theme, and in his young delight
Look'd all too beautiful to blight :
And pliant Hope resumed her song,
And lured her laughingly along.
That path—so dark at first to view—
The future—but she changed its hue
With flowers that at her bidding grew :
And tho' the maiden only own'd
A fearful bond not yet atoned,
A consciousness of Fortune's hate,
A dread of some impending fate
From which she could not be reprieved,
Such bliss was there it half deceived.
And Gerald look'd so happy, too,
One hour of joy he needs live through ;

24.

But with all Heav'n within that bow'r,
The young knight look'd beyond the hour.
"Now, Imogene, dismiss the fear,
I shame to own thy bosom near,
Of losing yet ; nay, do not start,
But tell me, love, with truest heart,
For I must know, to brave, my fate,
Holds still thy sire his scornful hate
For one who may not pride resign,
The last descendant of a line

Whose history, when told by foes,
Can prove them victims but of woes
Which marr'd their fortunes in the prime,
Recording not a single crime
To justify their wretched fate ;
In all but shame—unfortunate !
But wherefore pales my dear one's cheek ?
I've warrant now thy hand to seek—
Nay," (as the maiden sadly smiled)
“ I am not now the fameless child
You knew me once, for by my vow
My deeds beseem a ruddy brow ;
I boast not riches, but my name
Can all the wealth of honour claim ;
And many a lordly, regal hand
Has couch'd the lance or bared the brand
In answer to my knightly gage,
Or 'neath my guidance—tutelage.”

25.

A fond, but agonising smile,
That as he wonder'd pass'd the while,
Such smile as mother in her love
Might on a gallant child bestow,
Whose daring she would fain approve,
But feels that it must end in woe ;
A smile, but passing to behold,
Might melt the weak, make mad the bold :

Which spake all Love did e'er express
Of transient joy, and deep distress,
Pass'd struggling o'er the maiden's face—
A momentary, torturing grace
Which quick to settled gloom gave place,
Pass'd like the evanescent fitful gleam
Of dazzling-doubtful glory which will stream
Upon the pauses of a storm, to fade
And leave it darker by the contrast made.

26.

His question had dissolved the spell
By fancy wrought o'er memory,
(Elysian lapse of lethargy).
The story she had now to tell
Was not mere trouble, doubt, or care ;
It was, oh God ! it was despair !
Which all the future overcast—
Life's joys for ever with the past—
All of bliss she might ever know—
Already her cheek hath lost its glow,
And monuments her heart's deep woe.

27.

A criminal, condemn'd to die,
From sleep, of mercy dreaming,
Roused by the bell
Which sounds his knell

To find the headsman waiting nigh,
May help you to her seeming ;
Not to the sense of anguish there,
The bitterness of her despair
To madness urged along,
'Twas Heav'n beside
To her denied—
Ah ! how she felt that wrong.

28.

Like one awak'ning in the tomb,
Tho' there he dwelt as do the dead,
Yet bursting sleep's regenerate womb,
He lives rejoicing—from his bed
Would start—when, oh God ! o'er his head
Mountains of earth, now heap'd, constrain
Him, living, lifeless to remain :
His eye is useless there to see,
His hands are bound unto his side,
His voice must there unheeded be,
And none may know 'twas there he died.
He feels not, knows not aught of pain,
But that he must not live again.
He dies a prisoner, and his chain
The smallest motion must restrain,
With all the world in his ken !

29.

With buried joy we may not sleep,
And hopelessly alive we weep.
Of all that made life dear bereft
It is no boon that life is left.
The hopes which bloom and but decay
In ruin, losing not their sway,
Are loved the more that they betray.
And Imogene's wild dream dispell'd,
Still o'er her heart its empire held—
Its beauty haunting memory there,
A spell to bind her to despair.

Her fairy world a chaos now,
The light had left her tearful eye,
The bloom had wither'd on her brow,
And but her pallid cheek to spy
For her had Niobé stood by.

30.

“ With threats and taunts they hourly tried
To quench my love and wound my pride—
Call'd Heav'n to witness oft that thou
Hadst faithless proved and brok'n thy vow.
That on thy loved and honour'd name
Had fall'n the clouds of crime and shame,
And lost to thee were virtue—fame.
Had I believed, the woful tale
Could least of all their hopes avail.

Fortune may change, fate sometimes veers,
The heart holds on that true-love steers ;
The tide of glory, ebb of shame,
May sink or swell, Love's lambent flame
O'er strand or wave is still the same ;
And they could teach life-wasting care,
Or grief's alternative, despair—
But could not make my heart of thine
Its old idolatry resign ;
No, no, they might defile the shrine,
But not the spirit worshipp'd there,
Nay, Gerald—nay—no kiss—Forbear !
God ! on my lips he does not know
There's double poison, Sin and Woe !
Pray listen, love, and ere we part,
Into thy keeping take my heart.

31.

“ My Mother, she whose gentle pray'r,
Went nigher to have brok'n my heart
Than all my sterner sire would dare,
But for her ever watchful care
To soothe and blandish him apart,—
My Mother, she whose love still came
Between her child and ruffian force,—
My Mother, who could never shame
A tender parent's hallow'd name,
Or love from policy divorce,—

My Mother, oh ! the gentlest flow'r
 That ever bloom'd the wayside by,
 Or cheer'd the pilgrim's weary hour,
 By imaging that kindly pow'r
 Which makes his hopes on high,—
 My Mother, oh, the kindest, best,
 That e'er on childhood smiled,
 Too eager to be early blest,
 Wung off to her eternal rest,
 Ah, me ! without her child !

32.

“ Her child, who from her fresh-fill'd grave
 Was rudely torn away,
 Denied, what sorrow could not crave,
 Approaching in a creeping slave,
 From tyrant, but 'twere said he gave,
One hour to weep and pray.
 Her child, who ere she could believe,
 That ceased had her last pray'r,
 That outward sense did not deceive
 The heart, whose struggles must relieve
 Its anguish from despair,
 Was dragg'd to hear a lover's suit,
 She knew but to detest ;
 Of whom, albeit her tongue was mute,
 Her eye, though little that could boot,
 Its hate and scorn express'd.”

33.

“ His name,”—“ Alas ! I loathe to say,
 That seal for ev’ry crime,
 The watchword of each bloody fray
 That scatters through the land dismay,
 And characters the time,
 Bids holy quiet far away,
 And finds the raven ready prey
 In this distracted clime.
 By some he is the Red Hand hight ;
 I know him as the recreant wight,
 His peers, *De Courcy* name.”—

34.

“ What, he ? the demon in the fight,
 The slow to spare, the swift to smite,
 The firm of hand, but false of plight,
 Chivalry’s blot and shame.
 Now, by golden spurs, I swear,
 And knightly pledge all odds to dare,
 When Honour points the way,
 I loathe the murd’rous fray,
 And think it shames earth’s holiest cause,
 Of knighthood’s precepts makes mere saws,
 That some its garlands wear,
 Who outrage Heav’n’s imperious laws,
 Yet win the great world’s loud applause
 Through every sacrilege, because

They boldly brave and bear ;
 But Virtue's Valour's fitting frère,
 And glory, though of both the meed,
 They cannot separately share,
 For timid Virtue's but a reed,
 And Valour's single deed
 At best is but despair !

35.

"But, Imogene, thy father's name,
 Though stern, is unallied to shame,
 He surely cannot mean to wed,
 The child in his affections bred,
 With Infamy and Wrong,
 However proud and strong ?
 Better to see thee early dead,
 Better to choose his child a mate
 From out the beggars at his gate,
 Than doom thee to De Courcy's bed,
 On the broad *earth there* breathes no viler churl."
 "My father only sees in him an Earl,
 And flouts as Bardic song,
 Or as the fancies of a timid girl,
 To be her handmaids told
 The fears that aye precede,
 Or come with him along ;
 The curses of the young and old,
 Which, he maintains, attend the deed

Of every warrior bold,
That makes his foemen bleed.

36.

“But, hush, 'tis sinful this delay,
And double treason not to say,
Howe'er with sorrow rife,
This morn 'twas mine in vain to pray
The freedom of another day,
As bootless was my strife,
The fierce old man said sternly ‘Nay’—
Then bade his vassals bear away—
My senses reel’d—my hot brain burn’d,
My reason from me fled.
(Ah ! would it ne’er return’d)
Stunn’d—senseless to the altar led,
I knew not what was done or said,
Not even the scene’s identity,
Answer’d my agonizëd call,
The trophied banners round the hall,
The sculptured figures on the wall,
Priest, sire, guards, confused were all !
A consciousness I had of crime
A-doing, yet but a mockery,
That must give place to time,
A vague but hideous phantasy,
Which still the grasp of memory flies,
Spectred with horrors such as rise

Above the couch on which may stretch
Some fever'd or o'erwearied wretch.

37.

“ The formless shadows of that hour,
Resolved into a spell with pow'r,
 My sleepiest sense to wake ;
The trump that from their graves shall call
‘ The sheeted tenants of that hall ;
 Will not so clang ing boom,
Nor more imperatively shake
Their dust accumulated pall,
 And on their time respited slumbers break,
With final doom
More startlingly, than wrought the word
 Which I,
A client in Death's portal heard,
 And inly stirr'd
 With wrathful fire
Forgot my first—last—chief desire,
 To die !

38.

“ The tortured wretch who faints from pain,
Is summon'd back to life again,
 But by a sharper throe,
And thus with sense benumb'd or dead,
My spirit wandering, memory fled,

They struck a sterner blow,
And quicken'd with acuter woe,
And stung from torpor into life.
Oh ! yes, o'er madness, wilful wight,
They still could triumph, still could blight,
With consciousness, its wildest flight,
Saluting me De Courcy's Wife !"—

39.

"His Wife."—Up from the couch he sprung,
And toss'd his hands on high,
Back from the hills, the woods among
His fearful cry,
Prolonging nigh,
A thousand echoes rung,
As 'twere a word that would not die.

40.

A kindling frenzy in his look,
His frame with fierce convulsion shook,
His heart's blood upwards flush'd amain,
The veins grew black upon his brow,
Their pulses beat against his brain,
As seeking down to earth to bow,
While starting sinews did denote
The fearful struggle in his throat,
The choking—agonizing strife
That pride maintain'd with tears for life,

He stagger'd, bent as from a blow,
Beneath that overwhelming woe,
Then flung himself her feet before,
As devotees their God implore.

41.

" Oh ! say not thou'rt another's wife,
O'er every other joy of life
As Heav'n preferr'd,
Say 'twas my heart's o'eranxious dread,
Or that some juggling fiend instead
Of thee I heard ;
An arrow crashing thro' my brain,
Had more of mercy, less of pain
Than that wild word.
Oh ! say—but hold, you do not stir,
And calmly lie.
You will not yield me back one sigh,
Or say I err,
Then let me die !
Still motionless why hangs thy head,
As though from it the life had fled ?
Oh, let me take thy last command,
However dread,
E'en from the rifled outraged hand
Another wed,
Its medium made a fiend's lot bland,
And left him chafeless in despair.

Thou'l not refuse me this last prayer,
My love?"—She moved not, nor yet said—
 Yet he might dare,
That hand lay stretch'd within his grasp,
Nor sought—nor shunn'd the timorous clasp
 Which woo'd it there.

42.

Great God ! what doth that light touch tell ?
Not so had wrought a witch-wife's darkest spel'
 The smite of proofless lead,
The bolt of thunder bursting o'er his head,
The chancing on a midnight quell
 Where aged blood was shed,
The o'er-human aspect of deep hell
 Less of appalment to his frenzy wore,
 Nor might so thrill
 The frame a feeble mother bore ;
Clay cold—his fever flushing blood
 Iced to its chill ;
But lightning-like its horror understood,
Shiver'd in particles the frozen blood,
 And all was o'er,
Life snapp'd its chain—the spirit fled—
One shriek—one spring—he reel'd and fell
 Where she lay—Dead !
That frenzied cry her funeral knell,

That couch her bier and bridal bed,
The Stars, mute mourners, o'er her head
Their dew-drop sorrows softly shed,
The tendril flowers had fonder care,
A shroud to make her bosom bare,
Idly was wept their fragrance there ;
But vying with its ashen white
All paler grew each parasite,
While in default of human tongue
The moaning winds her requiem sung !

HELEN.

AN IMAGINARY TRANSLATION OF ONE OF THE LOST BOOKS OF
THE CYPRIAN VERSES, DESCRIPTIVE OF AN INTERVIEW
BETWEEN ACHILLES AND HELEN.

A SCHOOL EXERCISE BY A BIG BOY ON THE LOWEST FORM.

PROLOGUE.

WHEN bright hair'd Phœbus only deign'd to smile
On worshippers in Delos' sacred Isle,
That time the duteous Sacrifice was o'er,
And far-come pilgrims had perform'd their vows,
In moss-clad cave recessant from the shore,
Or inland seated under myrtle-boughs
A bard of rarest fancy might be found,
Ionian Maids and lovers list'ning round,
This legend chaunting oft in strains divine :
Of his grand song the faintest echo mine.

HELEN.
—♦—

SAY, Goddess of imaginative mind,
Who sighted art where History's Muse is blind,
What time, and how, Achilles, man-divine,
Saw radiant Helen's heavenly beauty shine ?
That beauty memoried on the Stygian shore
Where shadowy hosts of friends and foes deplore,
And trace to it their like untimely fate,
And mourning, still admiring, cannot hate.

Then held the first recorded truce, was made
Between the powers in mighty arms array'd,
The truce Atrides, king of men, decreed
To sage Antenor's pray'r, and Ilium's need :
When Troy's proud hosts first felt Achilles' rage,
And found unequal war they could not wage :
Dreadful in arms, and glittering like a God,
Which way the hero turn'd there Death too trod.
Each day adds terrors to his great renown,
He routs an army now, now sacks a town ;

Th' opposing hosts no longer can sustain
The shock of war embattl'd on the plain,
They fly the field before his threat'ning arm,
And cowering in the high-wall'd streets they swarm.
So, when the dark'ning clouds roll up the sky,
And heat oppressive bodes a tempest nigh,
The clust'ring bees from neighb'r'ing fields arrive
With thronging hum, and crowding, fill the hive :
Ev'n Hector dash'd with wonder feels affright,
And slow retiring shuns the dang'rous fight ;
The panther thus, about to rend his spoil,
Snatch'd from the flock despite the shepherd's coil,
Should some fierce lion of o'erawing size
Bound from the wood, and roaring, claim the prize,
Drops from his bloody jaws the quiv'ring prey,
And slinks apart, nor dares the desperate fray :
So Hector overmatch'd, tho' loth to yield,
Retreats to Troy, and leaves the battle-field.
Pelides following shakes the Scæan gate,
All Ilion trembles, prescient of her fate,
Loud on his myrmidons the hero calls,
And thinks to scale or breach the massive walls.

That time Antenor (foremost still to seek
The end of strife) occasion found to speak
Sage counsel, proffer'd oft before in vain
(Not mighty Zeus can Fate's decree restrain)
To Priam he—the king reluctant came,

By clamour call'd to witness Ilion's shame—
“Ancient of days, and most revered of kings,
To whom each morn some new affliction brings,
Unearn'd by thee—provoked by Paris' crime,
A wrong to Greece—a curse to Phrygia's clime !
If not irrevocably doom'd by Fate,
Let us avert some part celestial hate,
Such as now rages in Athæne's breast,
And Hære's frown—Poseidon's wrath attest :
A truce besought, and from the Greeks obtain'd,
A time for sacrifice and conclave gain'd,
Our plea, the burial of the mighty slain
Strew'd by Achilles' spear along the plain ;
Let triple altars to the Gods arise,
Atone their wrath with blood of sacrifice,
And then as usual at thy palace gate
Convene thy council, and the means debate
To end this war. Some compromise between
The restoration of the Spartan Queen,
And Troy's dread sack, becoming us to make,
And not dishon'ring Grecian kings to take,
Helēnus, or some Sage of elder years,
By Pallas taught, shall charmful give our ears.”

He said—the King and all who heard were moved
To swift compliance—Paris' self approved,
Left in possession of the ravish'd dame,
His greatest glory and his greater shame.

Idæus straight despatch'd, Atrides sought,
Him 'mongst his peers he found, and wisdom taught
With amicable speech the chief address'd.
“ Favour'd of many gods, and by Zeus bless'd,
Leader of kings, and that unnumber'd host
Which swarms along and frights the Phrygian coast :
Thee, reverend Priam, monarch long o'er Troy,
By my voice greets—Twelve hours we would employ
In feeding pyres, and burial of the slain
Your death-charged spears have stretch'd along the
plain,
Appeasing wrathful gods with sacrifice,
And then to council call'd the old and wise,
Antenor pleading for your wrongs' redress,”
Pallas her priest, or all the gods may bless
An elder wisdom, who to peace still leans,
With revelation of some happier means
To ensure their will, or ev'n your wrongs requite,
Than clashing spears, and life destroying fight,
A compromise becoming Troy to make,
And not dishon'ring mighty Greece to take.”

To him Atrides, inly pleased to hear,
Glad of excuse to check Pelides' spear,
(The jealous leader of a mighty host
Mislikes too much success another's boast,)“ We grant the truce—Go raise the funeral pyre,
What further time the burial rites require

Be yours—the spirits of the slain, no more
Leave wand'ring houseless on the Stygian shore,
That done, the angry gods propitiate,
The elders call, and hold the grave debate,
Then their resolves to our high tent convey,
Provoke the strife or send in peace away—
Twelve hours reposeful on our arms we rest,
Atrides swears—Olympian Zeus attest.”
His trident lifting as the oath he spoke,
No chief gainsays nor dares the king revoke.
Idæus bears the welcome news to Troy,
But mournful rites restrain its people's joy :
Some searchful traverse slow th' ensanguined plain,
And homeward bear the bodies of the slain ;
Some seek the neighb'ring groves, and hew
From swift-cleft cedar wood, and darkling yew,
The needful fuel for each several pyre,
The smoke curls upward—shoots aloft the fire.
Like rites the Greeks a lesser time engage,
Few on that day had glutted Hector's rage,
For once Pelides, full arm'd, rush'd to fight,
He swept the field tempestuous in his might ;
Like light'ning flashing from his thund'rous car
He made one-sided ravage all the war !
Their dead inurn'd, the Greeks at large disperse,
Some listless stray, some future fights rehearse,
Or heave the quoit, whilst sinewy wrestlers strain
To overturn their rivals on the plain ;

Some rear the mast, and spread the snowy sail,
And woo for seaward trips the favouring gale,
Others in varied tasks the hours employ,
Presaging widowhood to wives of Troy ;
Re-forge new weapons—hardening beat the steel,
Which sparks out anger Vulcan's strokes to feel,
Secure the greaves' or buckler's doubtful joint,
Feather the arrow or make sharp the point,
Surmount with brass, or line with hides the shield,
Or plume the casque that flames above the field ;
The soil'd cuirass some make again to shine,
The falchion rust and bloody spoil resign,
From the keen edge bid notches disappear,
Or shape the beechen and far darting spear ;
Rebuild and poise again the shatter'd car,
Or fix new wheels—the wings of rapid war ;
Some traces mend, some fodder down their steeds—
Two were divine, and all of famous breeds.
The chiefs or to their tents or ships retire,
These lie supine, those circle round the fire,
And council hold, or fatted heifers slay
The needful calls of hunger to allay,
Then, portion'd off the gods' selected share
Of bones and fat, Prometheus' crafty snare,
Their slaves the jucier parts on coals prepare.

Not so Achilles, lone along the shore
He brooding strays, revolving anger o'er,

Th' unspoken anger that inflamed his breast
When the great king gave ear to Troy's request
For temporary peace, and still'd the war ;
Slighting the glitt'ring spoils which load his car,
On nobler conquest bent, he deems a grief
The truce that gave to wearied Mars relief :
So ruthless he, rapacious but of fame
He holds inaction little less than shame ;
Too prone to guess Atrides' jealous hate,
He turns alike from festal and debate ;
In vain the king with affable disguise
And hon'ring praises seeks to foil surmise ;
In vain his motive labours to conceal,
For rival instincts rival thoughts reveal ;
But Agamemnon holds the sovereign sway,
His will declared, Pelides must obey.
Compell'd obedience is a hateful part,
And silenced anger tortures most the heart :
So felt the Chief as lone along the shore
His heaving breast its spleen-fed burden bore ;
Poseidon views him with a sorrowing eye,
Doom'd on that shore supine in death to lie
Long ere his bloomy form shall reach its prime,
Or feel the chill of hoary-headed Time.
He mourns, as but celestials mourn, the fate
Decreed to mortal so divinely great,
And wills that Até shall not hold her sway,
Embitt'ring life so soon to pass away :

The Oceanides at his command
Whisper soft murmurs on the velvet strand,
Plaintive and low, the hero wandering near,
The soothing sounds fall charmful on his ear :
Eolus too, the God requests to send
The gentler airs that most on peace attend,
They come and flutter round on dewy wing,
Cool his hot brow, and aërial numbers sing—
Soon balmy peace steals o'er his troubled breast,
Which now no more the Harpies' power confess'd,
These purged in sighs, and quickly wafted thence,
The Hero own'd the God's kind influence :
“ Poseidon, God, whose watery billows roll
From farthest south to Atlas' northmost pole,
(Where snows eternal mock Helios' sway,
Their fulgence dazzling e'en the eye of day,)
And westward make illimitable sea,
Unbeach'd, and sighting far-infinity !
Accept, O Sea God, my remorseful praise,
For heav'nly balm which moody wrath allays,
And I remiss, rude wandering by thy side,
No prayer to offer—I to thee allied,
The child of Thetis, silver-footed dame,
Whose sire, like thine, from ancient Pontus came :
To thee, wave-ruler, I devote the spoils
The rich reward of all my this day's toils.”
The God, well pleased, renew'd his vigour then,
For gratitude becomes both gods and men.

And great Æacides, content and blest,
Mov'd bounding forward with a lighten'd breast,
Climbing a rock that high o'erpeers the plain,
Far sighted too above the wavy main,
With most admiring eye he views the fleet
Where countless nations in one concourse meet :
Their masts—a forest wave along the sea,
Whose heaving bosom seems oppress'd to be
By the vast weight of their enormous hulls,
Each monster shadow its bright surface dulls.
Now, gladd'ning in Helios' arrowy rays,
The far-spread-out encampment charms his gaze,
The many-color'd tents that fringe the shore,
And the huge hosts that scattering darken o'er
The glittering sand, or upward from the main
Move populous, disporting o'er the plain,
Gouted with blood, and all the stains of war,
Furrow'd with tramp of steed and track of car,
His eye soon ranges where still smoke the fires
Of Ilion's grief-damp'd funereal pyres,
There pious Trojans still perform each rite
That frees their heroes from the shades of night ;
He notes their numbers with remorseful heart,
His rage the cause of far the greater part,
And sad reflects ere long must come the day,
When the like dues the Greeks to him shall pay ;
Next Ilion's towers attract the warrior's gaze,
Well worth admiring and recordful praise,

With circling walls that tenfold round enclose,
Proof to assault from myriad banded foes,
High-piled and many-chamber'd some may vie,
With Thebes' huge fanes that stand the Nilus by,
Renown'd Thebes where Memnon holds his sway,
And mystic priests hide worship from the day ;
All seen—admired in every part anew,
And comprehended in a single view,
The mighty fleet a burthen to the main,
The two huge hosts that sure oppress the plain,
The towering city to destruction doom'd,
The vision'd dead as from their mounds exhumed,
The greater number destin'd still to die,
All group'd, enlarging Wonder's wistful eye ;
The hero's thoughts admiring seek the cause
That such adversities together draws,
And of one central ruin seems the fate,
To which they troop, content, if not elate.
Impatient longings spring from mere amaze,
To see this Woman-wonder, past all praise ;
To Thetis, goddess-mate of mortal sire,
Sure of accord, he breathes his fond desire :
“ Cerulean daughter of the vasty deep,
Whose cares for thy sole offspring never sleep,
Prefer my pray'r to Zeus, all Gods above,
Or more indulgent Cytherea move,
Who, fav'ring Paris, guards his beauteous prize
From near approach of too admiring eyes ;

Move her to grant, small boon to *me* decreed
For Helen's sake on this sad shore to bleed,
Living one moment on the fair to gaze,
For whom Contention seems all earth to raise,
Whilst Gods descend and mingle in the coil,
And mortal-like each other would despoil."

Thron'd 'midst her nymphs in deep recessant caves,
Above which ocean rolls translucent waves,
The goddess hears his prayer reverberate,
And, anxious to atone untimely fate,
Yields swift compliance to his fond desire,
Nor thinks her darling can too much require :
Stately ascending thro' the ambient tide,
The waves disparted, gurgling on each side,
She glittering leads her long attendant train
Aloft the bosom of the billowy main ;
So Vesper's quivering radiance lights the way
Of stars to highmost heaven when sinks the day,
Far ocean fast receding 'neath her feet,
The shore approach'd, and seen the mighty fleet,
The Goddess bids arise a silver mist,
Like those swift moving, and as silence whist,
Which roll o'er pasture-fields at eventide,
When lowing herds wait on their 'wilder'd guide.
Shrouded in this, and wing'd by aidant airs,
To Ida's mount *Aeacides* she bears.

Meanwhile bright Helen, whom the truceful day
Blest Freedom gave beyond the walls to stray,
Sought with her train the ever-tuneful grove
Where Ilion's daughters loved at eve to rove,
And wand'ring there beneath the grateful shade
Heard the wild talk of many a dame dismay'd
By dread report of that sad morning's war,
Whole hosts o'erborne by young Pelides' car !
Godlike in form—the Chief's o'erawing rage
Abash'd the field—not Hector dar'd engage ;
Wondering she hears, and wishful breathes a sigh
To greet this matchless hero, eye to eye.
To Aphrodite, queen of soft desires,
Whose zone-bound bosom love at will inspires,
Giver of charms—rejoiceful still to see
Th' unbent of war to beauty bend the knee,
Whose bloom, ethereal, Helen seems to share,
And, but as mortal less divinely fair,
High favour claims, her sway asserting best,
To love inclining every gazer's breast,
To her, whom wishful beauty needs invoke,
The woman of the radiant presence spoke.
“ O wave-born goddess of the charmful mien,
Thou soul-subduer, and of Love the Queen,
Bless now my wish, compliant as with thine
To Paris' prayer I did mine ear incline,
Shaming the lord whom I had sworn to love,
And fierce celestial chastities, above,

Provoking to eternity of rage,
Which not a nation's ruin can assuage,
So direful blue-eyed Pallas when irate,
So vengeful jealous Hære roused to hate.
Thou know'st, when captive borne to Cræne's isle,
On Paris' suit I long disdain'd to smile,
Until in Klia's form (a reverend dame
My household's elder) you persuasive came,
And soft compliance urg'd in Aphrodite's name.
Thy will made known, with heart uncharm'd and coy,
I yielded straight and bless'd the Phrygian boy :
Mindful of this, and daily offerings made,
Rich gifts by Helen on thy altars laid,
Attend my pray'r and aid me to behold
This youthful warrior famed o'er all the old,
Whose bloomful form shines like a god's afar,
And charms the eye of e'en opposing war ;
Whom yet unconquer'd Hector fears to meet,
Tho' dark-eyed maidens love his glance to greet."

The Goddess heard, and lo ! a cloud of gold,
Like those o'er which Helios' chariot roll'd,
Envelop'd lovingly the heavenly fair,
And bore her noiseless thro' the ambient air
To Ida's mount, where on its thymy breast
The silver mist of Thetis moved to rest :
Each rival radiance shone a separate day,
Seem'd Cynthia's this—seem'd Sol's the warmer ray,

Soon as they met, they paused on either hand,
So kiss the glitt'ring waves and golden sand.
The godheads smiled, in sweet accordance there,
Of prescience yielding to each other's care,
To bless the Hero's and the Queen's desire,
They move apart and bid the clouds retire :
Obedient these ascend to upper air,
And their own radiance lights the lovely pair,
The proud strife-queller of the high-plumed crest,
And soul-subduing Helen stand confess'd.

Own all ye Gods, whose ever-memoried sight
The perish'd forms of those you loved delight
In visionary view—who with the will behold
All that e'er lived of charmful mien and mould,
Own, as they people o'er the past again
With bloomful women and heroic men,
Amongst the host are none to ye reveal'd
Can peer the two, that sunn'd that thymy field.

In manhood's prime, when given his goddess-bride
Not with his glorious son Peleus had vied :
Not great Æacus, eldest of his line,
Nor famed Perseus, a man of form divine,
Not Jason, theme of songs that never tire,
For whom the Colchian sorceress robb'd her sire :
Not one of all the Argonautic crew,
E'en he, who Calydonia's terror slew,

Nor yet Bellerophon, whose godlike mien
Rais'd lawless passion in the Thracian queen ;
Theseus, on whom fair Ariadne smiled,
And sinn'd to save, to be in turn beguiled :
Not the Tyndaridæ, that glorious pair
As brave in arms as was their sister fair :
Not all, tho' seen in primeful glory's days,
Had like Achilles charm'd fair Helen's gaze !
Thro' powers majestic winning graces shine,
He awes, yet charms,—half mortal, half divine !
So heart-enslaving Helen found the chief,
Beyond high-wrought and preconceived belief.

Like wondering rapture swells Achilles' soul,
As from bright Helen's form the mists unroll,
More beamy than their radiant atmosphere,
The light she shines, reflective they appear.
Of height majestic, her voluptuous form
Retain'd the virginal and freshful charm
Of nymphed beauty : such the aërial grace
Of Artemis, impulsion'd by the chase,
When, oft swept back by Zephyr's amorous wing,
Her light robes fondly round the goddess cling,
Her limbs define, and gauzing closely show
Her bosom's pinky buds and billowy snow.
So Helen charms, but proves to nearer view
Not charmful only, but seductive too ;
Like Aphrodite waking soft desires,

And lighting with a look unlawful fires
In breasts, that previously all wrong disdain'd ;
And when Mars called from nuptial rites refrain'd.
Her dark eyes in resplendent lustre shone,
Love's lightnings flash'd thro' beauty all their own,
A new day dawn'd where'er a glance she sent,
And Youth and Age in equal homage bent.
Lived not alone in these the Spartan Queen ;
Reveal, O Gods ! the heaven of her mien,
The dazzling glory of her open brow,
O'er which, in circling radiance floating now,
Her rippling locks and curls of golden hair
Shed light and fragrance on the amorous air :
A peachy bloom just tinged her oval cheek,
Sight ever kiss'd her lips ere she could speak ;
But when a smile in dimples round them play'd,
Or a new ecstasy their music made,
A hundred Cupids thence their arrows sent,
And punish'd him with wildering ravishment.
Not when disrobing by the glassy stream,
And fondly imaged there, did Leda seem
Half so enchanting to the amorous eye
Of the swan-god, impatient floating nigh,
And in each tempting wavelet's reflex shown
Her neck and bosom whiter than his own.
Not Danæ's self so dazzling to behold,
Whom right to match the God came sheath'd in gold ;
Nor blithe Europa, for whose charmful sake

Zeus did not shame a brutish form to take,
And dared midst wild'ring seas his way to track,
His beauteous prize no burden to his back ;
Less lovely Io in her prime appear'd,
Whom jealous Hære most as rival fear'd ;
Not Omphale, whose glance Herakles tamed,
Had Helen's conquest o'er Achilles claim'd ;
Nor yet the other Amazonian Queen,
Of love-inflaming and seductive mien,
Whose victor, when in chains he captive led,
Enslaved himself, woo'd fondly to his bed ;
Not every separate loveliness combined,
Though each might gods themselves in fetters bind,
Could equal soul-subduing Helen's grace—
A radiant beauty both of form and face !

Thus to each other on that thymy field,
The Hero and the Queen were first reveal'd.
Both of their admiration mute awhile
Like statues stood—Life flash'd in Helen's smile,
The conscious beauty soonest self-possess'd,
Accepted homage, and the Chief address'd :
“ Say, Goddess-born of heaven-descended Sire—
Lineage or name no gazer need enquire,
Thy looks alone thy deeds and birth declare,
And herald Fame relieve of half his care ;
Say, from thy silence and oppressive eye
Should trembling Helen augur fear and fly ?

Swells anger now within thy patriot breast,
All wrongs and shames to Greece in me express'd ?
Seek'st thou for words to shaft thy godlike scorn ?
Ah me, unhappy ! wherefore was I born
To win despisèd love—earn noblest hate ?
The most remorseful victim of sad fate !”

Well might Love's Queen o'er Helen's powers rejoice,
The mournful music of her soften'd voice
Waked in the Hero's breast a tenderness
That Frailty's self had pardon'd with caress.
His eye, still gladd'ning o'er her speaking form,
Found with each breath some new created charm,
Till wonder's spells full admiration broke,
And thus the raptures of his senses spoke :
“ Nay, by Heaven's jealous queen, whose high-wrought
hate
Suspicion's breath makes vengefully elate,
The yielding breast of beauty oft to shame,
And every erring sister's sin proclaim ;
By Hære's frown, and most obdurate heart,
Compelling both to witness on his part,
Achilles swears, now his enraptured eyes
Possess'd of thee slight every other prize !
He envies Paris, nor can think to blame,
Such wealth of capture must atone the shame—
The glory rather of his matchless theft,
With power to seize had woman only left,

t man, nor god—even Menelāus' self
 st in his heart excuse the roguish elf ;
 n too I envy for that heavenly past
 en night and morn his arms were round thee cast,
 memoried joys far richer his sad breast
 an other mortals of their choice possess'd,
 'e Paris only—earth's great victor he !
 st fame and all to come I'd give to be
 blest—my fate enrich'd beyond the power
 Gods to grace with like celestial dower.
 fected rapture living in thy kiss,
 y bygone loves could not reprove my bliss ;
 ch countless graces Heléna adorn
 e blooms perennial—virgin every morn !
 e soul of beauty shrines in tenderness,
 1y buds her bosom if not love to bless ? ”
 ilist speaking thus the Hero's former guise
 sumes a glorious change in Helen's eyes,
 s words like gushing raptures sparkling flow—
 s beauteous form expanding seems to glow
 th more than mortal, Love's celestial fire,
 God's enamour'd luminous desire !

Now for the first time Helen's heaving breast
 ve's quick'ning and impassion'd pulse confess'd,
 r heart—which hitherto unmoved below
 y like an icicle enshrined in snow,
 hich Menelāus' smiles had fail'd to warm,

And Paris could not out of torpor charm
With all the youthful frenzy of his kiss,
Which never knew from beauty sense of bliss—
That heart waked now a double life to claim,
Throbb'd—flicker'd—heaved as molten or afame,
And all its ecstasy of consciousness
Compell'd her panting bosom to confess.
Shone in her eyes a new and wondrous light,
Softer to view, yet dazzling their own sight,
A sense of wild'ring rapture flush'd amain
Each pulse, and coursed thro' every vein :
Then strangely blending with this new-found joy,
Came bashfulness and fear—Love's sure alloy,
And Helen trembled now like some new slave
Before her lord ; and yet, ye Gods ! would crave
No freedom ever—pris'ning in his arms
Her soul's desires, with all her bloomful charms :
Softly she blushes 'neath his amorous gaze,
Though equal passion her own look betrays,
And deep emotions long-drawn sighs express,
And all the truth before she speaks confess.

“ Son of the chaste and silver-footed dame,
Who deem'd the nuptual rite a sort of shame,
And but as captive yielded to thy sire
The frost-white breast which glitter'd back Love's fire
Thy scorn, too surely Helen must deplore,
And yet, ah, no ! Hate ne'er thy semblance wore :

Thy speech a mockery I might conceive
But that my heart (its first time to believe),
Sunn'd by the radiance of thy love-lit gaze,
Trustful derives new being from thy praise,
And bliss transcendent, whence comes greater woe,
Both sadly fated conquest to forego ;
Ne'er of my prize must I possession take,
Whilst thou unbless'd shalt perish for my sake :
No pair so love-enrich'd or so love-lorn !
Ah ! had we met in Helen's stainless morn,
Wer't the last day when casting down their arms
Contending kings drew lots for these sad charms,
Sh'ad mock'd their power, and bounding to thy side,
Left Atreus' son his token for his bride.
Thee now beholding in thy primal bloom,
My heart's wild cry would still the voice of doom,
Obliterate the past, and place once more
A virgin Helen on the Grecian shore,
Unsighted yet of man, or known to be,
Till Love's true majesty appeared in thee ;
Or if stern destiny must be fulfill'd
Far as thy death, let Helen too be kill'd,
Else, as the flame shoots upward from thy pyre,
A living victim leap into the fire,
And purified by that stern ordeal, share
The Elysian home the gods for thee prepare."—
Thus white-arm'd Helen's love-impassion'd heart :
Flush'd with like zeal the chieftain on his part,

“ O zone-bound goddess and cerulean dame,
If ever grace from ye to suppliants came,
Accord, re-echoed by Pelides’ soul,
Bright Helen’s prayer—in death be ours one goa
Since not on earth, in Hades let me wive,
Or, both unequal with stern Fate to strive,
Waft my strong voice where high empyrean-thro:
By elder deities as ruler own’d,
The cloud-compelling Zeus with kingly nod
Makes all earth tremble, and alarms each god ;
Remind him, Thetis, that whilst doubtful raged
The war gigantic which the Titans waged
Against his sway, asserting Kronos’ right,
And shook his throne with hill-upheaving might,
The strong-arm’d giant to his rescue came,
Released by thee to save the god from shame ;
And thou, bright queen of ever-soft desires,
Whose aid so oft his changeful love requires,
The adverse fair else cold to his embrace,
Make now our wish a guerdon for thy grace ;
If, as predestin’d, on yon fated shore,
By heroes’ mounds all sadly hillock’d o’er,
Achilles must atone the countless slain
Of whom surcharged his spear shall leave the pla:
And if, obedient to the voice of doom,
Ten years imprison’d in the hateful gloom
Of yonder towers, must Helen lingering wait,
Grant, thus fulfill’d the oracles of Fate,

Our shades uniting on the Stygian shore
 Shall never thence past joys or life deplore." "
 The godheads smiled, and quick from Ida sent,
 Wing'd by the swiftest wind that heav'nward went,
 The warrior's high tones thro' Olympus rang,
 Vibrating, as when silver cymbals clang,
 Their music quicken'd all the ambrosial air,
 And thrill'd thro' ev'ry god in council there !
 Ev'n Zeus was moved, and said with soften'd breast,
 As the boy Ganymede his hand caress'd,
 Speed earthward, wind, and tell yon matchless pair
 That Zeus, well pleased, accords their love-born pray'r ;
 Achilles doom'd to die, untouched by fire
 Shall Thetis snatch from off his funeral pyre,
 To Leuka's isle convey, where life renew'd,
 His form with immortality imbued,
 Bright Helen, gifted with eternal bloom,
 Shall crown and share his ever blissful doom !
 So Zeus decrees, nor dare the Fates gainsay,
 Ends where eternity begins their sway."

Wind-wafted from Olympus' topmost height
 The god's decree brought measureless delight,
 The listening lovers on the mountain side
 Already seem'd by rapture deified ;
 The goddesses with gladdening souls attend—
 The sea-nymphs' queen and beauty's love-crown'd
 friend—

No more shall Thetis and her sister train,
With pearly tears augment the glist'ning main,
No more shall prescient woes disturb her rest,
Or haze each morn her white-enamell'd breast :
The cestus-wearer smiled, well pleased to share
Her joys immortal with that glorious pair.

The high-plumed spoke : "This boon in part to pay,
A hundred white bulls yearly shall I slay
In Zeus' great name—and every life-given morn
His altar with some well prized gift adorn,
For ne'er such wealth of joys was pledged before
As lives for me in visionary store,
One foretaste, Helen, of this heavenly bliss,
One rapt embrace—one long and silky kiss,
And then Achilles, doom'd till death to part,
Shall wait content the life-destroying dart."

A soft blush dawn'd like light o'er Helen's face,
The crowning glory of each heavenly grace,
Her virgin heart made virgin every charm,
Though wave-like love suffused her yielding form !
Tremblingly radiant of a joy divine,
Her lips ambrosial to the chief's incline,
Her snow-white bosom heaving on his breast,
The Paphian's doves' wings flutt'ring down to rest.
Indulgent Cytherea only smiled,
Nor sought to check the gambols of her child ;

Who laugh'd outright, of sacrifice secure,
The silver-footed goddess blush'd demure,
And bade the clouds enveil and separate
The lovers' forms—a penance due to fate,
Not yet aton'd for all the promised joy—
“Thy triumph quite enough, malicious boy,”
She said—“Seek victims in an humbler pair,
Celestial bliss shall these two only share.”

The clouds descending, fluid-like enfold
The chief with silver, and the queen with gold,
Just as their bright lips parted for a breath
Were both evanish'd, ne'er to meet till death
With chast'ning, icy hand had still'd desire,
And then, new gifted with celestial fire,
Shall both in virginal, perennial charms
Wander by day with ever linkèd arms
Through Leuka's sacred isle, and rest at night
In dreamful bliss to wake to new delight.

“JE NE SAIS QUOI.”

BLUSHING underneath his gaze,
But not weary of his praise,
Myrrha asks with downcast eyes
Reason for the Poet's sighs—
Bids him by his art discover
What it is that makes him love her—
Couplet catch and bind each grace,
Mirror faithfully her face—
Life-like every charm pourtray,
So that none her pow'r gainsay,
And the world thenceforth account
Verse the lymph of that pure fount
Which the Greek boy, wand'ring nigh,
Look'd but in, and stay'd to die !
Difficult it is to tell ;
Not in language lives the spell.
Myrrha's form doth realize,
Beauty figured in the skies :

That which Fancy's vision graces
Slumb'ring where the dew founts are ;
Making holy quiet places,
Spiriting the evening star !
But the Poet fears to say,
To his mistress' bidding, " Nay."
Shames he too, and dares not own,
Fancy's highest flight outflown ;
That the task his skill defies,
And the desperate fool replies.

" Mine own," said I, " fond Nature sought
To limn in thee a lovelier thought
Than birth'd the olden Poet's dream
Of Psyche, watch'd by Dian's beam,
As timidly she lightly trod
To snatch a glimpse of her boy-god,
(So long unseen, though nightly press'd
With woman's deep faith to her breast)
And, loth her presence there to vouch,
The flow'rs blooming round his couch
Their fragile heads did scarcely crouch.
Or that thy varied charms express
Their more enamour'd fancies' dress
Of Her, who won by dazzling smiles,
Seducing softness, mirthful wiles,
The prize denied to Wisdom's mien,
And the haughty brow of Heav'n's queen,

The daughter of the thunderer Jove,
Thy mother, or thy mistress, Love.
Yet neither likeness served to tell
The witchery of Myrrha's spell.
'Tis not the charmful pow'r that lies
Beneath the fringe of those dark eyes,
Of every glance the changeful light,
That aye the newest seems most bright,
Still imaging the sparkling spray
Of garden fountains when they play,
With light winds in the noontide's ray.
'Tis not thy bosom's pinky snow,
The dazzling pallor of thy brow,
Thy pouting lip—thy dimpled cheek,
Th' empulsion'd playful heart they speak :
Nor those dark locks which unconfined,
Are ringleted by every wind,
And, flashing like the Raven's wing,
Back on the day a new day fling ;
'Tis not the melody that wakes
With thy sweet voice, and prison'r takes
Each list'ning sense, to waft the soul
Still nearer to its destined goal :
That of thy lithe and buoyant form
Each movement seems another charm ;
That but to meet or catch thy glance,
Like wavelet floating in the dance,
Might wishful sighs from angels steal,

Make idiotcy of beauty feel.
A rarer grace doth me inthrall—
A spirit breathing through them all,
Which ever living in the thought
The tongue has ne'er to being brought—
It is—blush, muse ! be pride forgot,
My Myrrha, 'tis—" *I know not what.*"

VIRGINIA.

We seldom save in dreams behold
Such heavenliness of mien and mould,
Her nymphed graces seem imbued
With all the wealth of womanhood,
Nor lose the light and fresh'ning charm
Of Spring-time years, a thought more warm ;
Upon her breast two buds of snow—
The life of love, the death of woe ;
Her sculptural limbs so finely wrought,
And still no marble, blissful thought,
Full veins throb underneath their white,
Quick'ning and quiv'ring when delight
 Bids her bosom heave and glow—
 Blushes rapid come and go.
But yet of passion's wasteful fire
She nothing knows, nor can desire.
Fraught with some diviner grace,
The light illumining her face,

An angel's presence seems to speak,
One of those, dove-eyed and meek,
Who, winging from their realms above,
Have only here some task of love,
Stoop but to 'suage a pestilence,
Or plenty o'er some land dispense ;
Some woe beguile, some grief efface,
Guide back some erring soul to grace :
Where'er she cometh, seemeth she
A blessing, bidding gladness be,
As of some brighter world a ray
Sent to cheer Life's wintry way !
Her shining curls of golden hair
Part o'er a brow, so calm and fair,
A frown must be a stranger there !
The lily native to her cheek
A blushing rose once came to seek,
And parting, proof of its despair,
Left its bloom and fragrance there.
But oh ! her deep and tranquil eyes,
With lids that ever slowly rise,
What words can image ? you should see,
And then you'd learn to pity me
Who, loving her, despair to win,
Against myself my love a sin !
Their beauty ne'er by passion blurr'd,
A tender theme—a touching word
Unlocks the fountains of her heart,

But there delaying—loth to part,
Gathering in light along their lines,
The trembling tear-drop lovelier shines
Than Earth's most rare and priceless gem
Sparkling upon a sparry stem
In stalactite or crystal cell,
By Genii watch'd and guarded well,
Making the light wherein they dwell.
But gazing on its mute distress
My passion seems a holiness ;
Might I but kiss away that tear,
At shrift I need no penance fear.
Gift with like grace, their joyous smile
No falsehood covers—masks no guile,
But carrying to the heaviest heart
Of their own ecstasy a part,
It seems some bright Intelligence
Fresh from the realms of Innocence,
Of Life but lending Beauty more,
And like a ripple running o'er
Those wells of that diviner hue
With which the sky's unfathom'd blue
At night or noon may not compare,
Less deep, less tender, oh less fair,
The brightest Seraph's dwelling there !

AN EPITHALAMIUM,
ON THE
MARRIAGE OF ANNA MATILDA AND HODGE.
BY A VERY CRABBED BOY.

— ♦ —

TAKE warning, Ladies intellectual,
Time never fails to recollect you all,
And ere his swift wings scar your brows serene,
Or silvery streaks your locks of auburn sheen,
Ere light the eye, or music leave the voice,
Get mated, lest you find yours Hobson's choice !
Was never hero-worshipper more nice,
None for a smile exacted higher price
Than Anna ; in her search among the Real
No man, she sigh'd, was like her Beau Ideal !
Had one the form, he lack'd some mental grace,
He who had that, was classic not in face.
Thus she went on her suitors always scorning,
Until her looking glass told her one morning
That nearly forty summers had pass'd o'er her,
And on his heel had turned her last adorer,

Whilst she with "meditations fancy free"
Evok'd the horrors of celibacy,
Old maidish frouziness, strong tea and snuff,
And a sly toss of aqua vitæ stuff !
She heard, blest moment, Hodge knock at the door,
Although a lout, of self conceit a bore,
One of that class described by Knickerbocker,
Who keep their wits (if any) in a locker,
In lewdness only rakish, and a sinner,
He always went asleep just after dinner,
And seldom, save at mealtimes, look'd awake,
Then only from the quantity he'd take.
Still he to *mind* some boorish reverence paid,
Not understanding it he ne'er gainsay'd :
And thus might serve, half husband and half slave,
Her vanity from willow weeds to save.
So when encouraged by a hundred smiles,
And kept awake by many old-girl wiles,
Faith he—half frighten'd when the words were said,
Ask'd her to share his fortunes—half his bed !
And she, with one short sigh to Youth's dreams gone,
Resignedly put mistress Hodgeship on.
Thus proving Ladies intellectual
Find matter more than mind effectual
In solving the great problem of their lives,
And Heroes wanting, men must make them wives.
Yes ! when their fancies into cravings fall,
They're very common women after all.

TRUE VICTORS.

YE Fortune crown'd, of pride beware,
 Her wreaths are seldom evergreen :
Ye vanquish'd ones, hug not despair,
 If ye have Honour's soldiers been.

Mischance hath names can flush the cheek,
 And make even slavery's bosom bound,
Bid all man's throbbing pulses speak,
 Like warriors at the trumpet's sound.

The synonyms of glorious deeds,
 Self-sacrifice for mankind's sake—
The watchwords of earth's holiest creeds,
 The tomb'd—the dead to life they wake.

'Tis not alone with victory
 To consecrate the patriot's name,
Since most thy martyrs, Liberty,
 Have power to set our souls aflame.

The laurell'd brow of hero Tell
Not half his majesty imparts :
Lives in the test he braved, the spell
Which homes him in our heart of hearts.

Our Washingtons all grandly sleep,
Shrined on the altar of Success :
But names there are o'er which we weep,
But surely honour—love not less ?

Above the ruins of a state
Gleams Kosciusko's like a star :
Who would not rather share his fate
Than rule the serfdom of the Czar ?

The very children of his foes
Are lesson'd *him* to emulate ;
Dew'd by our tears his cypress grows,
To prove the *good* are only *great* !

Mark ! thro' yon listening multitude
A tremor runs—some cheeks grow pale
But flush again—so fierce, so rude,
What is it moves, or makes them quail ?

Look ! each man seems to hold his breath,
Not thine, proud orator, the boast,
Some misterm'd traitor's timeless death
Vibrates and tingles thro' the host.

Long pausing o'er the storied page,
Half blind with tears the student see ;
Learning the warrior's noblest rage
He weeps above—*Thermopylæ* !

What stills the Theatre's gay throng,
On ribald lips awes back the jest ?
The skilful poet charms his song
With names bewept in every breast.

Boast not your tyrants' triumphs then,
Success with them is but a cheat !
They conquer not the *hearts* of men,
And *time* suffices to defeat !

ASPIRATION.

DREAMS of my Youth—bright visions of the Past—
All glorious as the morning's dawning light,
Life's first loves priz'd and trusted to the last,
Now age steals o'er me dark'ning into night,
Shine ye like stars from out its misty cope,
And heavenward guide my soul's still dreamful eye,
Teach me beyond the grave itself to hope,
Nor let Imagination with me die.

GREEN-ROOM SKETCHES.

DONE TO REQUEST.

Subjects.—A Mild Melpomene, and a Youthful Thalia.

PROLOGUE.

To know one's self's the noblest art !
The next, to read our fellow's heart.
In that I have but little skill,
But this I exercise at will.
No conjuror I—I but contrast
The passing *present* with the *past* :
Treasuring in mem'ry's wakeful store
The signs of thoughts and deeds of yore,
I but appeal to them from you
To learn each purpose you've in view :
Rememb'ring me of Springtime's dress
At Autumn's fruitage I can guess,
And thus with little toil or care
Find things in "words as light as air."
Of my proficiency you'll own
Some proof I have already shown,

Yet you desire—oh how unkind—
A full length portrait of each mind.
No easy task—'twill crown my skill
To paint you truly, please you still.

First, maiden, thou of downcast mien,
Whose eyes are ne'er too often seen,
Wasting their light upon the earth,
And seldom raised in wrath or mirth,
An easy page art thou to read,
A problem to thyself indeed,
But not to me. I see thee lost
Within thyself, not *tempest toss'd*,
But *mist* beguiled on Fancy's sea,
No beacon on the strand for thee.
Thou dream'st of some ethereal shore,
Which reach'd, thou'dst turn from to deplo
Your pastime this, and this your grief,
Of thought and time the greatest thief.*
But pass we this,—I'll not conceal
That more I know than I reveal :
I seek to show you as you pass
Only your outlines in my glass.
With you no charm like gentleness,
And so it is your constant dress ;

* A Platonic attachment is the secret luxury and misery s
in these lines.

And proven 'tis, though you it tease
You've woman's wish all men to please.
Habits are principles with most ;
'Tis Education's simplest boast—
As bent the twig, the tree 'll incline,
And easy principles are thine.
To hate with you's against the grain,
It merely is a sense of pain ;
'Twere Christian-like, but you, I fear,
Some earthlier feeling worship here.
You'd make the very best of friends,
Having to serve no other ends
Than those of loving, looking kind,
Being of faults and follies blind,
At least not blameful. You could list
A secret and not tell I wist,
Would make a confidant most rare,
To be compliant all your care,
But you could scarcely curb or guide
The passions you would find beside.
For Friendship sometimes needs a check,
And yours would only be a beck,
The which unheeded you'd smile on,
Though o'er a precipice it run.
In fine (another I've to paint)
With too much weakness for a saint,
You ne'er malevolently sin,
And should you fail from Heaven to win

A crown of its unfading glory,
Your doom will be but Purgatory.

And now, my Hebe, in whose eyes
The light of conquest seldom dies,
And fading, only there gives place
To some more deep and tender grace,
And save for which thy beau might deem
Thou wert but some more life-like dream,
A phantom lovelier than night
E'er gave to man's empassion'd sight.
Thy face, so like an April morn,
Since smiles and tears live there twin-born,
A title-page is of the heart,
And all its secrets doth impart ;
As variegate in loveliness,
As ope to gladness and distress,
In every change you find delight,
And were a true cameleonite,
But that thou canst not for thy life
Assume the sternness of strife,
E'en tho', dark threat, has Malice vow'd
With steel to fit thee for thy shroud.*
Of these thy virtues, such the spell
I fear thy faults I cannot tell,
But I'll essay. You're prone to prize

* The threat of a rival accustomed to the stage use of bow dagger. A figurative menace, no doubt; perhaps a quotation.

Too much the homage of strange eyes ;
Too openly aspire to rule
The worthless heart of ev'ry fool
Who wears kid gloves with puppyish grace,
And rich in whisker thinks no face,
Not even thine, of beauty blown,
Is half so lovely as his own.
I fear me much you would mistake
A virtuous man in some town rake.
This is not native to your heart,
But of your way of life a part,
A vanity 'twas hard to shun
Upon the sparkling course you've run :
But Eve's most fatal legacy,
To loveliness still left in fee,
Is that unrestful wish which aims
On every heart to have some claims.
Though all should flatter, still were you
Much "richer" in the esteem of few.
With seemly carriage ne'er dispense ;
'Tis dangerous e'en for Innocence
To romp, though it may be in sport,
Or e'er assume the hoyden's port.
Never pretend to *play* that game,
Which *play'd* in earnest wins but shame.
Escaping taint, your purity
Must lose at least its dignity.

The sermon's ended : don't complain
That base advantage I have ta'en
To *preach*—but privileged to paint—
A pretty woman to a saint ;
I've only told you how to make
A good man rival to a rake,
And just as *foolish*, for your sake.

LOVE ELEGIES.

I.

WHEN to my prayer you lately gave
The flowers, whose beauty seem'd to die
Shrined on your breast—too sweet a grave
To mourn them in with ev'n a sigh ;

You slighted with some term of scorn
The gift and my entreaty too :
Ah me ! that we were only born
To woo and be contemn'd by you.

No pride have I, true slave to love,
I murmur not, whate'er my pain ;
You gave !—enough, o'erjoy'd I strove
To lose all sense of thy disdain.

I placed them, wither'd as they were,
Within *my* breast—they'd bloom'd on thine !
Ah, Fate's mysterious hand was there :
Love's joys are yours, his griefs are mine.

Vainly I found for them a vase,
Set in the sun—fresh fill'd at morn.
No quick'ning pulse in them there was ;
They died, like Love, of thee forlorn.

And yet, I said, they shall not die,
And be replaced. No ! o'er their grave
Immortal I will make the sigh
I breathed, because I could not save.

Glass'd on my page, and types of me,
I'll saintly make their fate and mine—
A holy thought their memory,
And, spite of thee, a sweet one thine !

To latest time I'll tell my grief,
And swan-like sing me when I die :
Sad hearts, unborn, shall find relief
In echoing my heart's last sigh !

And though unmoved you see me weep,
Their tears shall freely flow for me,
And o'er the cold urn where you sleep,
Bear witness 'gainst thy apathy.

II.

Fear not reproach or breath of strife,
Weave, weave a willow wreath for me,
I'd rather mate despair for life
Than own one angry thought tow'rds thee.

Reject, but wrong not, nor suppose
Resentment e'er could light its flame
Where, in the midst of many woes,
Love rear'd an altar to thy name.

Not in our gift affections are,
Or mine had slept and still been free ;
I did not make, much less can mar
This destined grief, my love for thee.

Though, like thyself, thou'st kindly charm'd
The bitt'rest word that thou could'st say,
Thou'st err'd to think the heart once warm'd
At Love's by Friendship's shrine could stay.

'Tis woman's fault, not thine alone,
The death of hope to fond heart speaking,
To think some kindness can atone
For that despair her words are wreaking.

I'd rather sit beside my grave
And count each minute quickly fleeting,
Than own my heart th' expedient slave
To tame Love's pulse to Friendship's beating.

Could I awhile like Hecla shroud
Love's quick'ning fires with fleece of snow,—
Were they more sternly ice-embrow'd,
Grief's lava stream must soon o'erflow.

Oh spare to praise—another time
'Twould prouder make than wide-world fame ;
But now, in passion's feverish prime,
Its cold breath tortures—sets aflame !

Fie on my talents—where their grace ?
What win they of thy love for me ?
I swear before my Maker's face,
I'd give them for one sigh from thee.

Vainly I read : you've murder'd hope
With that set sentence, cold and clear.
Why urge me with the world to cope ?
You've left the future but a tear.

Think not that I with wrongs upbraid—
I only mourn ; and mine a love,
Ne'er by the pow'r of words portray'd,
E'en thy sweet solace is above.

With man, there's no such word as "never,"
So time may calm my troubled brow,
And then (if Fate should not dissever)
I'll claim the friendship—torture now.

III.

Had Eden's exiles—when they first,
And then for ever, pass'd its gate,
And their full hearts were like to burst
From sad abandonment to fate,

Been doom'd to dwell beside its wall,
And with it ever in their sight,
Thus ever doubly feel their fall,
That punishment had damn'd them quite.

Oh yes, 'twas mercy bade them go
And seek the desert drear and wide,
And there forgetful—not of woe,
But its first sense—more calmly bide.

'Tis thus with me, and well I leave
So soon thy presence—torturing now,
For it must hourly bid me grieve—
I loving still and loveless thou.

I thank thee—it was kindly meant
The sister's love you proffer'd me ;
But not with Friendship's cold content
My burning heart can mated be.

IV.

The gladsome brow oft plays a part
For fashion's sake, nor dares rebel
Against the time—the sinking heart
Pines not the less in its lone cell.

Thus though I live and sometimes smile,
I have not lost one sense of grief ;
Though I assume content the while,
The mockery gives me no relief.

Thou deem'st not when I stand apart,
My soul is only fill'd by thee ;
Thought finds no haven on life's chart,
Save grief—Love's sad exchange with me.

Nor when thou hear'st me calmly speak
To thee or others by thy side,
Know'st thou that Spartan-like I seek
The shame that murders me to hide ;—



That 'tis my fruitless task to break
Thought's spell with words unfelt tho' spoken.
From every minute's lapse I wake
To chide my *breaking* heart, *unbroken* !

Ev'n when I part and leave thy sight,
I leave not Love's, nor can forget.
Oh, to be free ! how fast my flight
Were bounds to recollection set.

But in my heart thy image shrined
Still wakes the love thou'st bade despair,
And I could wish my life resign'd,
Since it must haunt me everywhere.

Say what you please, I must complain,
Or madden with o'er-mast'ring woe ;
I would not share with thee my pain,
But, God ! I cannot grief forego.

V.

'Tis said I love thee—ah, mine eyes
Have been sad traitors to my heart,
Which hoped unheard to breathe its sighs,
Unseen to weep and from thee part.

There is no grief like love unspoken,
Cradling its being in despair ;
Ev'n when it leaves the heart unbroken,
It darkens all the future there.

Yet, lady, mine had been conceal'd,
In secret sighing life away ;
My lips had ne'er the truth reveal'd,
But that it did itself betray.

For, ah ! to love thee and despair,
Was sure sufficient grief to me :
Why should the world partake my care,
And know I vainly worship thee ?

You'll think it strange that I lament
The being known a slave of thine,
Thine eyes alone bright argument
Ev'n for a vainer love than mine ;

But, lady, thou art richly placed,
And I am poor as poor can be,
Yet proud enough to feel disgraced
To seem to covet aught but thee.

And thou hast suitors, many a one
Of noble havings, lordly birth,
And great pretensions, and yet none
I've learn'd to envy for their worth.

But in this sad and humble guise
I dare but breathe apart thy name,
To strive with fools I but despise
Would Love's high holiness defame.

With me, although I've loved before,
My passion ne'er hath traffic been ;
I sacrifice where I adore,
And still my heart enthrones a queen !

EXTREMES ARE NEIGHBOURS.

THE POET UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF BLUE DEVILS IN THE BOUDOIR.

1.

IMOGENE ! though the world be bright and fair
It hath not a joy for me ;
In its joys unforbidden I may not share,
And the hue of the fruit is as beautiful there,
Ungraced by the Garden's plea.

2.

If I join in the laugh of the lightest hour,
Less light in that laugh must be :
I sit alone in the festive bower,
And garlanded with the fairest flow'r,
The tomb's a like mockery.

3.

The bays that encircle brighter brows
Would wither if placed on mine,
For, stainless, it likens ye best, ye snows,
That darkly beneath it an icicle grows,
As false to the touch as thine.

4.

It came at my birth, this dark'ning dower,
 The future thro' life to dim,
 For ah, on my lips there's a pois'ning power,
 The sweets of the Bacchanal's bowl to sour,
 Tho' brimming with bliss to him.

5.

My soul's ever sad, and if smiles can bright
 On my face a moment glow,
 Oh they fade like the fen's deceptive light,
 And a heart as dark as its depths at night
 Lies joyless and cold below.

[IMOGENE, who is evidently much affected, sits down to the piano and plays Weber's last waltz. The poet, after a sly look in the glass, and a re-arrangement of his curls, sips his wine, lights a cigarette, and rather enjoys it !

THE POET UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF HUNGRY DEVILS
 IN THE GARRET.

1.

Oh weary burden, my sad life
 Would I could lay thee down !
 Nay, good man, spare to frown—
 You know not the chivalric strife

(Since Poverty I took to wife)

I have maintain'd with care,
Or, now that I despair,
So young in years,
Her bonds accurst
In life to burst,
You'd give me tears !

2.

Oft uncomplainingly at night
I've supp'd on my heartache,
And slept, though sure to wake
In still more miserable plight,
A curse the consciousness of light
Good things and fair to see,
And not their owner be :
Then spare to blame
That I so cross'd,
Shipwreck'd and lost,
Would die for shame !

3.

Attribute not to mis-spent time,
Or blameful idleness,
This harrowing distress.
Not to succeed has been my crime.
With toil I'm old in manhood's prime,

And but to live content,
Ne'er uttering lament
O'er bright hopes flown,
That bread I've none,
I flout the sun,
And make my moan !

4.

Mine are not wilful woes, in sooth,
Though thrown out in the race,
Not one hope left to chase.
As high of heart was I in youth,
As full a trust had I in truth,
As you who've gain'd a prize.
Then mourn nor me despise,
That now I sigh
All lonely left—
Of heart bereft,
And wish to die !

[A sympathetic landlady unexpectedly enters with a dinner; deposits tray, and exits: and notwithstanding a deep sense of humiliation, the poor Poet, after a short altercation with his pride, determines to live—and dines.

A BYRONICAL PHANTASMA.

“I HAVE lived long enough, though the hue of my brow
Doth scarce own the tinge of a summer beam yet.
I have lived long enough, for I gaze on thee now,
And I feel that the sun of that summer hath set.

“One conscious hour to make my heart a bed
Upon her bosom’s ever wakeful billow,
I cared not, though the next should lay my head
In dreamless sleep beneath the weeping willow.

“Last night we parted strangely—no farewell,
Long linger’d over, seem’d of love to tell.
No thrilling light touch of the little hand,
That might the roughness of despair command,
Aton’d the grief that ever glooms that hour.
The tremulous light touch, whose magic power
(As if ’twould second life to me impart)
Quickens my pulse, and o’er informs my heart
With all it fears, yet madly dares to know ;
What makes its bliss and seals (alas !) its woe.

Which gives in parting, and makes absence blest,
Her heart in trust to vibrate on my breast—
Fond shrine ! where true Love trembling lies,
Less of a victor, than a sacrifice—
A tim'rous prodigal return'd to bless
The long deserted, and whose wild caress
Hath all the transport of a stolen joy
Which knows but Life and Death and no alloy.
And this was I denied. Oh cruel Fate,
How lone my home ! my heart how desolate !

“ My name, forsooth, and why should I preserve
That which I prize not, nor mayhap deserve ?
It served me nought with her—must *she* give place
To keep the useless menial from disgrace ?

“ Impend the thunderbolt above my head,
If not for love, I will not stoop for dread.
Oh if this proud heart ever own'd a fear,
’Twas lest remorse should blanch her tinted cheek ;
To dim that bright eye with one bitter tear,
Were shame and agony no words can speak.
Ah, should I rend that breast to me too dear,
Not mercy from myself I then could seek.”

Oh ! talk not to Love of his sacrifice,
Nothing he weets of but the prize
Aspired of his heart : before his eyes

It leads him willing where'er it flies,
And the Pilgrim's peril enhanceth the shrine ;
With less of danger 'twere less divine !

* * * *

The stars were out, the moon was gone,
The tide below roll'd darkly on,
Save where the lone lamp's quivering light
Reveal'd its wild tumultuous flight,
Making each fleeting billow bright :
E'en such their love seem'd on that night,

A fix'd exception to its laws ;
Not of it yet triumphant there,
Within itself a climax, and a cause !

A something by which man might swear,
To do what man doth seldom dare.

A principle that would not fly,
With light and beauty from the sky,
Nor with the wild winds hurrying by,
Nor with the tide which swept away
To lose itself in Ocean's spray,
Nor with the hour, that less than all could stay.

The line of light the lone lamp throws,
Is fix'd while all else comes and goes ;
But oh, far more their mute caress
A symbol is of truthfulness ;
Which though their clasp may not endure,
Is as their spirits' being sure.



A something which must aye remain,
With power perennially to bless,
Tho' after fate should link distress
And lengthen but with woes life's chain,
Of which, tho' parted (ah, that thought), they must
retain

A memory, in itself a happiness !
Yes, tho' 'twas theirs—divided rest,
Till they should meet the stars among,
The thought that they had once been blest,
Their bosoms to each other press'd,
Partner'd each couch to which they clung,
And with the night winds round them sung
That deeply breath'd but tender sigh,—
The music of their lullaby—
Their eyes the stars that o'er them hung.
Again in dreams each parted hand
Thrills to the touch of its loved mate,
And bids them seek (defying Fate)
The warmer bliss their lips command ;
Lips that uniting may not part
Till there's a transfer, heart for heart.
Creeps through their veins that fatal fire,
For Heav'n too fierce, yet for desire
Too fond and full of tenderness—
Heart hallow'd, *it* of that caress
Hath made a sacrifice—youth's bloom
Their quivering agonies consume,

They seek and shrink into each other's clasp
Till both for being singly gasp,
Whelm'd in a flood of mutual bliss,
And life scarce 'scapes the crush of kiss
That fiercely struggles with the sigh
That faintly whispers, "Joy must die !"

Chaos come back they might control
By their identity of Soul !
"Memory—a viewless talisman with spell,
To call the sprited Past from out its cell,
And bid it in a glowing bosom dwell."

"The world seems changing, but our love,
Ark-like, the whelming flood above,
Remains, the welcome home of each true dove."

"Oh, look not up to the cloud-dimm'd sky,
Nor yet on the rapid wave below,
Hearken no more for the night wind's sigh,
Instead of whose plaintive moanings low,
Ruffianly blasts are threat'ning now,
We'll turn to each other—more fondly turn,
Love's light in our eyes has not ceased to burn—
Our hearts—ah, they never have ask'd to stray,
Our lips, ah, they nothing but love can say ;
And we'll creep again to that soft caress,
Whose lonely love left can so truly bless.

If pillow'd here the sickliest head
That ever mourn'd life's flow'rets dead,
Might dream to Heav'n life's sense had fled."

1.

Now all my own and more than ever
Mistress of my heart and soul,
Time's corrosive tide can never
Wear out link of thy control :
Fruitless were the world's endeavour
From our spirit-bonds to free,
Mutual guilt hath join'd us ever,
Here, and to eternity !
Two we met—that wild hour flown,
Ever after we were one.

2.

I know not if Heav'n's hand allotteth
Man a course he must go o'er ;
How is't a minute's madness blotteth
All that was, or went before,
The vital essence of which rotteth
To the heart's eternal core—
But Love—our madness so besotteth,
Others must our souls deplore.
Love hath stolen ethereal fire,
To make unquenchable desire.

3.

The vernal ray's inconstant quiver
Varies o'er the growing grass,
The hues of which it is the giver,
Lightly as a shadow pass.
The summer's tinge will last for ever,
Vital is its livery,
What the bolt may spare to shiver,
By the beam consum'd must be.
Summer's passion ours hath been,
And our hearts have lost their green.

4.

Nay, such the depth of their devotion,
That they made themselves away,
And to death they've but one motion,
Throbbing to Love's fiery sway ;
Though between them earth and ocean,
Mountains rear and waters roll,
By the pulse of that emotion,
Theirs is still a single soul.
The past must hold and death can't sever,
We're united, ever, ever.

5.

Yet, 'tis not that we cannot alter
What hath been—were it to be,

Think not that my heart would falter
Death to meet, embracing thee.
Oh, no, with sin I did not palter,
Once it tempted me with thee,
And with thy bosom for the altar,
Who would not its victim be ?
Conscious of its wakeful billow,
Who could weet of wail or willow ?

“ Say, what or who is he, yon soulless wight,
Who glooms the festive board with brow like night,
Or one who owes his fellow man a spite,
Or woe-begone, or wandering Eremite ?
He woo’s not woman’s smile, he shuns the bowl,
It comes not idly such stern self-control.
On all his eye with cold suspicion bent,
Betrays some inward fear or dark intent :
He should be look’d to, these are dangerous times,
Conception quickens but with daring crimes ;
Yet hold—I had not mark’d his pallid cheek,
And such did never care or venture speak :
As dark and frozen as an iceberg’s base,
It wants emotion’s agonising grace,
Which toils the eye, when energetic Hope
With palpitating Fear would boldly cope.
Perhaps some usurer, fluttering o’er his prey,
Who loves the feast, but shuns the reck’ning day ?

Or he was train'd beneath some rigid rule,
The secret science of the Jesuit's school—
Can mask his feelings to the curious eye,
Searchless himself, on others more to pry.
Perhaps ere now, a bigot to his faith,
He doom'd the stubborn heretic to death,
Or bore the sentence, which condemn'd unheard
Th' unconscious utterer of some giddy word,
On noiseless step thro' dimly-lighted hall,
The mute familiar of the cross and pall ;
And caught that livid cheek and stolid stare,
By gloating on his victim's clasp'd despair :
Whate'er he be, methinks his fate—his name,
Should much from memory and marvel claim.”

“ Alack, on him you bend a bootless frown,
Beneath his garb there lurks no Jesuit's gown :
It shuns not scrutiny, nor would conceal
A foeman's purpose or a traitor's steel.
At festal board scarce gladsome guest is he,
But ne'er in rudeness mars its jollity :
He comes of habit, not for love or pelf,
No cynic he—he thinks but of himself.
He hears, but warms not to the patriot's strain ;
He feels, but grieves not a tyrant's chain.
He hath no purpose—wrong may brave his eye,
O'er worldly ruin he can breathe no sigh,
Yet swell'd his heart once with emotions high

As ever emulative Boyhood felt,
By tale or trophy taught to burn or melt ;
As ever frenzied an enthusiast's dream,
Pondering some fancy or Utopian scheme.
One fatal error, ending in a crime,
Which claims forgiveness, not from man or Time,
To which his passions did his soul betray,
(Still Reason totters where the heart holds sway),
Hath blighted all the promise of his years,
And left him nothing of the past but tears—
Tears that flow wildly and yet flow in vain,
Crime's a corrosive with eternal stain !
Nor his the gentle and heart-easing grief
Which brings the troubled of an hour relief ;
Which soothes the mourner, and with grateful flow
Greets absent friends or falls for others' woe.
It seeks no sympathy, it yields no balm,
Nor is it torpor, the terrific calm
Which follows or precedes that stormy burst,
But tells of torture long in silence nursed.”
“ ‘Twere well did he repent.”

“ Alas, I fear
There falls from him no penitential tear ;
That less he mourns th’ eternal life of crime,
Than that forbidden bliss which fled with time,
That retrospection brings before his eye ;
Not all he lost, but what he’d hoped to buy,
And bought, and would again, were it to be :

That minute's joy were worth eternity.
The *victim*, not the *dupe*, of his desire,
'Tis not the dread of purgatorial fire
Afflicts him now ; he deprecates no wrath,
But mourns that time no resurrection hath ;
Spent on the past, his soul he might not weep,
Could he the plunder which it purchased keep.
Snatch'd from his arms ere Love had lost a grace,
Tho' long possession hallow'd his embrace.
If e'er in penitence his sorrows flow,
'Tis for the lost one's unbefriended woe ;
But what avail they ? Tears cannot reclaim
A blighted lily, or a sullied name.
Than such remorse, despair hath less of pain :
He can't repent—their love was not the vain
And heartless pastime of light hall or bow'r—
The self-will'd vice that speeds an idle hour,
A world was theirs, where Love was all their life,
Nor might they wage with Fate unequal strife.
They fell not lightly, nor with vicious haste,
Love's greatest triumph was when they embraced !
Alas, of Love's fatality, sad tests, remain
To each a wither'd heart, a blunted brain.

* * * *

A changeful aspect shows the temperate zone,
Where mists and sunshine share an equal throne ;
No fierce contention mars their liberal sway,
But bloom and verdure mingle as they may :

The grateful earth rewards the generous skies,
Its flow'rs but fade that others there may rise.
But sterner features mark true Passion's clime,
There storm and torpor alternate thro' time ;
A glitt'ring sameness wears the year away,
A tempest's midnight makes a dream of day ;
The sunbeam battens on a desert plain,
And fruitless falls on rocks the thunder rain.
If haply springs above the burning sand
One fragile flower—some diamond well at hand,
A dearer treasure to the Arab's eye
Than arms command, or plunder'd gold can buy,
It falls a victim ere its noon be past,
Sing'd by the bolt or smitten by the blast ;
Nor fate relenting can its bloom restore,
The sunbeam blackens what the tempest tore ;
Its germ destroy'd, it flutters down the wind,*
Ah, why should memory remain behind ?

* * * * *

His heart's a vacuum : no living care
Can claim an impulse or excite one there.
His life's a dream, the memory of the past.
One moment's beauty and eternal blast,
He loves none now, and died with Love's surcease†
The skill to flatter and the wish to please ;

* "Let her down the wind to prey at Fortune."—*Othello*.

† "Surcease."—*Macbeth*.

Bereft of honour, hopeless and alone,
The dewy fragrance of his youth is gone ;
Once wakeful to each wind that wafted by,
It woo'd and won the world's approving eye :
But spoil'd 'twas spent—it may not freshen more.
We cannot hope for him, we must deplore
His aimless life, his summer beauty's bloom
A garish garland on a living tomb.
In thick'ning twilight speculates his soul
O'er corse-like deeds, the grave his only goal." *

* As may be surmised, my very senile boyhood could not survive endurance of this nightmare, and they vanished together. The rebirth of the dawn of a new and a healthier existence may be found in following poem.

THE BLISS OF LONELINESS.

A LONELY man ! should I affect
Or sullenness, or sere,
Or brooding with a brow deject
Woo Pity's thriftless tear ?

My sorrows are a sad bequest
That I would fain eschew ;
I clasp not anguish to my breast,
But it doth still pursue.

Still Life and Youth and Hope are mine,
And I at times believe
When fairer fortunes do incline
I shall the past retrieve :

But I for morn have lost the charm
It once possess'd for me,
And noon was aye too bright and warm
For such a livery.

The happy and the high of heart
May hymn the quick'ning light—
The proud apparell'd only start
That they may be in sight.

But widow'd Evening suits me best,
And double beauty hath :
There's promise in the golden west,
And *quiet* on my path.

And when with mantled charms she glides
My window-frame before,
And darkens, else for me she bides,
The page on which I pore,

Rejoicing I throw by my book,
And quick for travel dight ;
No keys to turn, ne'er back I look,
But step into her sight.

A chaste salute she gives my brow,
And we our footsteps tell
Together to some tufted knowe,
Or lone romantic dell ;

Or trace some green lane winding far
Into the pasture-fields,
Where silence weets no rougher jar
Than nestling Nature yields ;

Or with some river's course we wend
Where only we would dare,
Whose meadow'd bank and serpent bend
Admit no thoroughfare.

Sweet converse hold we as go
Upon our mutual love,
Of every tender theme below,
And eke of Heav'n above !

Whiles we will linger by the side
Of some old straggling wall,
A weed-bound fortress which defied
The storm that strew'd the hall.

And as its structure strange we scan,
Much question of the art
That makes the slovenliest work of man
Complete in every part.

Ask how the barren stone became
A bed of bloomy reeds ?
How many gardens here might claim
Their wind-transmitted seeds ?

The wallflower boldly scents the gale,
While from you crevice peeps
A modest bluebell, droop'd and pale
As some lost love it weeps.

The violet, not always shy,
Unhoods its purple head
Beside the primrose, paling by
In creamy beauty spread.

Pied daisies, buttercups, and grass,
Gay plumage make I ween ;
But these nor flow'ring broom surpass
Its mossy mantle green ;

No verdure of the cultured fields
Can with its beauty vie :
I cannot tell the bliss it yields
To my delighted eye.

Here, where it met noon's glowing gaze,
It glints with golden sheen ;
There, only reach'd by slanting rays,
Tender and deep its green.

Thus I and Evening, far from haunt
Of worldly-wisdom'd man,
Intelligence a fresh romaut
From everything we scan.

But not unnoticed we intrude
On Nature's dim domain,
A warder hath the solitude,
And Robin will complain.

“ Thy challenge, Rob, we ne’er regret,
Trill on thy plaintive song :
Ah no ! he fears the limer’s net—
Sweet bird, you do us wrong.”

He sleeps at last—the winds grow chill,
The stars steal thro’ the blue,
And Silence sits o’er vale and hill
List’ning the dropping dew.

Where’er I go—whate’er my fate,
If liberty be left
So much to love I find, my state
Is ne’er of bliss bereft.

Shall I bewail my lonely lot
While it this solace hath,
Shrines for affection’s tenderest thought
To meet on every path ?

EXTEMPORE LINES,

WRITTEN AT REQUEST IN A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM ; THE
YOUNG LADY HAVING PREVIOUSLY REFUSED TO GIVE ME
A ROSEBUD FROM HER BOUQUET.

A GIFT I craved, and you denied,
Yet not your prayer can I refuse ;
The flower that in your bosom died
Shall grace the memory of my Muse.

But envious still, I cannot weep
For that its charms soon wither'd were ;
The guardian angel of thy sleep
I'm jealous of intruding there.

So but to die, I could resign
All that my dreams have promised me ;
Let such sweet martyrdom be mine
And who so cares may laurell'd be.

May'st thou thro' life the power possess
Still to withhold what others crave ;
And when consenting Love to bless,
Be *thou* still Queen, and *he* still slave !

A SONNET.

TRIFLES in idle hours give grave debate,
And so we argued wisely yesterday
What colour'd eye made most for Love or Hate,
The tender blue, the more impassion'd grey ?
The black's one luminous unchanging ray,
The hazel's varied loveliness elate ;
Of conquest sure, and yet deep thoughted too,
And beaming brown of every shade and hue.
Each had an advocate, and each maintain'd
His choice with learn'd and clerk-like argument :
List'ning to one you must have been content,
But heark'ning all, you ev'ry one disdained ;
To end the strife, I turn'd to Stella's eyes,
And there all memory of a purpose dies.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A SHORT SOJOURN IN DUMFRIES.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE "DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COURIER."

"Where'er you tread 'tis haunted holy ground."

In Dumfries stands a churchyard old,
Well peopled by the virtuous dead ;
If truth on monuments be told,
The worms were ne'er more nobly fed :

For chieftain proud of noble race,
Himself a pillar of the state ;
And native genius, whose own grace,
Might gain a mastery over fate.

And deep divine,—well versed in books,
And provost—legate of the law ;
And warrior, who in life, gadzooks !
Perhaps for neither cared a straw.

And martyr'd saints recorded lie,
Within this narrow space of ground ;
If o'er their tombs their praises vie,
Small difference in their dust were found.

I love those tenements of tears,
And seek them still where'er I stray ;
As griefs give back forgotten years :
Tombs are the landmarks of my way.

But never did I meet before,
So good a crowd in such a space ;
The loss each tombstone doth deplore,
Nor Greek nor Roman could replace.

If but Affection's tale were told,
No virtue but lies buried here ;
My conscience ! 'twere an age of gold
Might they come back to dry its tear.

Nay, smile not—'tis a theme for grief,
The error of the human mind ;
To living worth's low voice still deaf,
. To growing glory's blossom blind.

So envious of a goodly name,
It will admit nor gift nor grace ;
Contemporary worth's a shame,
And genius either daft or base.

Till they, heart-wearied, find a grave,
And want no more—then tongue and tear
A readier sympathy ne'er gave
Than they are offer'd, heedless here.

The funeral wail is long and loud,
The graven stone prolongs the strain :
And thriftless love embalms the shroud
Of one whose life hath pass'd in pain.

But let this pass : we must not grieve
Too long o'er ills we cannot cure ;
And grief but one spell here can weave,
Which may with memory endure.

Lo ! bends she now, where sleeps among
This *raree* crowd of the elect,
The Lyric Lord, whose untaught song
Finds welcome, joyous or deject.

The theme—the motive—nature's own,
Ne'er thefted from “Black Letter Boke,”
O'er Highland Mary we maun moan,
And laugh at Souter Johnnie's joke.

Not his the genius hate could cramp,
Proud proof of his own motto—that
“The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.”

Nor need we here the cypress'd shrine,
Though it beseems his travell'd fame ;
Did but the bending blade incline
O'er Burns, our homage were the same.

And grief and I as sadly weep
In his lone haunts as by his grave ;
Not that we here forgetful sleep,
But memory's there as fond a slave.

* * * * *

An exile ! so I've deem'd myself
Not less because no senate's ban
Proclaim'd me—more than simple elf—
Unfit for fellowship with man.

But, victim of sad chance or fate,—
Mayhap of follies all my own,—
With heart no more from life elate,
The bliss of being spent, or gone :

And sever'd from my native shore
By many a league of land and sea
Which I perchance may ne'er go o'er—
There can no truer exile be.

Ev'n wilful wending with the wave
Which bore me to a stranger land,
I felt of hope the early grave
Was pitted in my native strand.

On, in this spirit, have I stray'd
Through Albion's busy, blust'ring isle,
A lonely man, who, nor inveigh'd
Against a slight, nor woo'd a smile.

But here I have forgot my woe
Greeting Egeria's frankest fere,
Mine too—ere false ones bade me go
To be—Oh ! not an exile here.

Renew'd my old prerogative
To find in nature poesy,
Hom'd amid scenes where they must live
United to Eternity.

No longer listlessly I stray,
Unheeding whither morn or eve,
Companionless, a lonely way,
But o'er sad memories to grieve.

Impregnate of his gifts no scene
But minds me of immortal rhyme ;
And dwells with every blade of green
A thought of him, whose thought was time.

The silvery Nith, whose graceful wave
Flows not more freely than his song,
No charms can boast like those he gave—
Musing its meadow'd banks along.

Companion'd ne'er diviner thought
The murmurs of a stream of yore—
Not thine, Ilyssus, when they caught
The secrets of Socratic lore.

At morn my path he seems to guide,
To list the lav'rock loud and gay ;
At sweeter eve he bids me bide,
While Robin trills his vesper lay ;

Or o'er some daisy, droop'd and pale,
Outliving long its sisterhood,
Reft of the power to close and veil
Its bosom, long the wild bees' food,

Bend but to ask (of fancies rife)
If no relationship it claim
With that his ploughshare snatched from life
To garland his eternal fame.

Though Nature's tend'rest aspect here
Woos every sense with wakeful bliss,
And blithe in blessing may not fear
Refusal of her balmy kiss ;

And though no fairer scenes you see
Than those through which Nith winds and turn,
Their sole enchantment is to me
Their fellowship with Song and Burns.

THE LAY OF AN IMPROVISATORE.

1.

ITALIA ! Oh, Italia !
Beneath thy sunny sky,
Flowers quickly blossom—
Quickly blossom, quickly die !
But of their matchless bloom,
Their beauty and perfume,
Life a double bliss must be ;
And, when their spirits fleet,
Death on thy breast is sweet ;
Give such life and death to me,
And I'll keep my heart for thee—
Italia ! Oh, Italia !

2.

Italia ! Oh, Italia !
Beneath thy cloudless sky,
Glory seems man's passion,
And, like passion, flames to die ;

But of its trophied fame,
Its deeds and deathless name,
 Life a double pow'r must be ;
And, on thy breast divine,
A grave is but a shrine !
 Give such life and death to me,
And I'll keep my heart for thee—
 Italia ! Oh, Italia !

THE END.











